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Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely from a 17th or 18th-century manuscript. The text is arranged in approximately 10 lines, though the ink is very faded and the script is difficult to decipher. The first line appears to start with a capital letter, possibly 'A'. The text seems to be a letter or a formal document, given the cursive style and the presence of what might be a signature or a closing phrase at the bottom.

A
L E T T E R

TO THE

EARL OF SHELBURNE.

Ec. Ec.

PRICE ONE SHILLING

PL 473KX

A
L E T T E R

TO THE
EARL of SHELBURNE,

ON HIS
S P E E C H,

JULY 10th, 1782,

RESPECTING THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

A NEW EDITION.

By THOMAS PAINE,

AUTHOR OF THE WORKS ENTITLED, "RIGHTS OF MAN,"
"COMMON SENSE," AND "A LETTER TO THE ABBE
RAYNAL," &c. &c.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. S. JORDAN, No. 166, FLEET-STREET.

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1791

A L E T T E R,

&c. &c.

A SPEECH which has been printed in several of the British and New-York Newspapers, as coming from your Lordship, in answer to one from the Duke of Richmond, of the 10th of July last, contains expressions and opinions so new and singular, and so enveloped in mysterious reasoning, that I address this publication to you, for the purpose of giving them a free and candid examination. The speech I allude to is in these words :

“ His Lordship said, It had been mentioned in another place, that he had been

“ guilty of inconstance. To clear himself
“ of this, he asserted, that he still held the
“ same principles in respect to American
“ Independence, which he at first imbibed.
“ He had been, and yet was of opinion,
“ whenever the Parliament of Great Britain
“ acknowledges that point, the sun of Eng-
“ land’s glory is set for ever. Such were
“ the sentiments he possessed on a former
“ day, and such the sentiments he conti-
“ nued to hold at this hour. It was the
“ opinion of Lord Chatham, as well as
“ many able Statesmen. Other noble Lords,
“ however, think differently; and as the
“ majority of the Cabinet support them, he
“ acquiesced in the measure, dissenting from
“ the idea; and the point is settled for bring-
“ ing the matter into the full discussion of
“ Parliament, where it will be candidly, fair-
“ ly, and impartially debated. The inde-
“ pendence of America would end in the
“ ruin of England; and that a peace patched
“ up with France would give that proud
“ enemy the means of yet trampling on this
“ country. The sun of England’s glory he
“ wished not to see set for ever; he looked
“ for

“ for a spark at least to be left, which might
“ in time light us up to a new day. But
“ if Independence was to be granted, if
“ Parliament deemed that measure prudent,
“ he foresaw in his own mind, that Eng-
“ land was undone. He wished to God
“ that he had been deputed to Congress,
“ that he might plead the cause of that
“ country as well as of this, and that he
“ might exercise whatever powers he pos-
“ sessed, as an orator, to save both from ruin,
“ in a conviction to Congress, that, if their
“ Independence was signed, their liberties
“ were gone for ever.

“ Peace, his Lordship added, was a de-
“ sireable object; but it must be an honour-
“ able peace, and not an humiliating one,
“ dictated by France, or insisted on by Ame-
“ rica. It was very true, this kingdom
“ was not in a flourishing state, it was im-
“ poverished by war. But if we were not
“ rich, it was evident that France was poor.
“ If we were straitened in our finances, the
“ enemy were exhausted in their resources.
“ This was a great empire ; it abounded

“ with brave men, who were able and
“ willing to fight in a common cause; the
“ language of humiliation should not there-
“ fore be the language of Great Britain.
“ His Lordship said, that he was not
“ ashamed nor afraid of those expressions
“ going to America. There were numbers,
“ great numbers there, who were of the
“ same way of thinking in respect to that
“ country being dependent on this, and
“ who, with his Lordship, perceived ruin
“ and independence linked together.”

Thus far the speech; on which I remark,
—That his Lordship is a total stranger to
the mind and sentiments of America; that
he has wrapped himself up in fond delu-
sion, that something less than Independence
may, under his administration, be accepted;
and he wishes himself sent to Congress,
to prove the most extraordinary of all
doctrines, which is, that INDEPENDENCE,
the sublimest of all human conditions, is
Loss of Liberty.

In answer to which, we may say, that in
order

order to know what the contrary word **DEPENDENCE** means, we have only to look back to those years of severe humiliation, when the mildest of all petitions could obtain no other notice than the haughtiest of all insults; and when the base terms of unconditional submission were demanded, or undistinguishable destruction threatened. It is nothing to us that the Ministry have been changed, for they may be changed again. The guilt of government is the crime of a whole country: and the nation that can, though but for a moment, think and act as England has done, can never afterwards be believed or trusted. There are cases in which it is as impossible to restore character to life, as it is to recover the dead. It is a phoenix that can expire but once, and from whose ashes there is no resurrection. Some offences are of such a slight composition, that they reach no further than the temper, and are created or cured by a thought. But the sin of England has struck the heart of America, and Nature has not left it in our power to say, we can forgive.

Your

Your Lordship wishes for an opportunity to plead before Congress, *the cause of England and America, and to save, as you say, both from ruin.*

That the country, which, for more than seven years, has sought our destruction, should now cringe to solicit our protection, is adding the wretchedness of disgrace to the misery of disappointment; and if England has the least spark of supposed honour left, that spark must be darkened by asking, and extinguished by receiving, the smallest favour from America: For the criminal who owes his life to the grace and mercy of the injured, is more executed by living than he who dies.

But a thousand pleadings, even from your Lordship, can have no effect. Honour, interest, and every sensation of the heart, would plead against you. We are a people who think not as you think; and what is equally true, you cannot feel as we feel. The situations of the two countries are exceedingly different. We have been the
feat

feat of war : You have seen nothing of it. The most wanton destruction has been committed in our fight ; the most insolent barbarity has been acted on our feelings. We can look round and see the remains of burnt and destroyed houses, once the fair fruit of hard industry, and now the striking monuments of British brutality. We walk over the dead, whom we loved, in every part of America, and remember by whom they fell. There is scarcely a village but brings to life some melancholy thought, and reminds us of what we have suffered, and of those we have lost by the brutishness of Britain. A thousand images arise to us, which, from situation, you cannot see, and are accompanied by as many ideas which you cannot know ; and therefore, your supposed system of reasoning would apply to nothing, and all your expectations die of themselves.

The question, whether England shall accede to the Independence of America, and which, your Lordship says, is to undergo a
parliamentary

parliamentary discussion, is so very simple, and composed of so few cases, that it scarcely needs a debate.

It is the only way out of an expensive and ruinous war, which has now no object, and without which acknowledgment there can be no peace.

But your Lordship says, "*The sun of Great Britain will set whenever she acknowledges the Independence of America.*"—Whereas the metaphor would have been strictly just, to have left the sun wholly out of the figure, and have ascribed her not acknowledging it to the influence of the moon.

But the expression, if true, is the greatest confession of disgrace that could be made, and furnishes America with the highest notions of sovereign independent importance. Mr. Wedderburne, about the year 1776, made use of an idea of much the same kind.—"*Relinquish America!*" says he, "*What*
" *is*

“ is it but to desire a giant to shrink spontaneously into a dwarf?”

Alas ! are those people who call themselves Englishmen, of so little internal consequence, that when America is gone, or shuts her eyes upon them, their sun is set, they can shine no more, but grope about in obscurity, and contract into insignificant animals ? Was America, then, the giant of the empire, and England only her dwarf in waiting ? Is the case so strangely altered, that those who once thought we could not live without them, now declare they cannot exist without us ? Will they tell to the world, and that from their first Minister of State, that America is their all in all ; that it is by her importance only they can live, and breathe, and have a being ? Will they, who threatened to bring us to their feet, now cast themselves at ours, and own, that without us they are not a nation ? Are they become so unqualified to debate on Independence, that they have lost all idea of it in themselves, and are calling to the rocks
and

and mountains of America to cover their insignificance? Or, if America is lost, is it manly to sob over it like a child for its rattle, and invite the laughter of the world by declarations of disgrace? Surely the more consistent conduct would be, to bear it without complaint; and to shew that England, without America, can preserve her Independence, and a suitable rank with other European powers. You were not contented while you had her; and to weep for her now, is childish.

But Lord Shelburne thinks that something may yet be done. What that something is, or how it is to be accomplished, is a matter in obscurity. By arms there is no hope. The experience of nearly eight years, with the expence of an hundred million pounds sterling, and the loss of two armies, must positively decide that point. Besides, the British have lost their interest in America with the disaffected. Every part of it has been tried. There is no new scene left for delusion: and the thousands
who

who have been ruined by adhering to them, and have now to quit the settlements they had acquired, and be conveyed like transports to cultivate the deserts of Augustine and Nova Scotia, has put an end to all further expectations of aid.

If you cast your eyes on the people of England, what have they to console themselves with for the millions expended? or what encouragement is there left to continue throwing good money after bad? America can carry on the war for ten years longer, and, all the charges of government included, for less than you can defray the charges of war and government for one year. And I, who know both countries, know well, that the people of America can afford to pay their share of the expence much better than the people of England can. Besides, it is their own estates and property, their own rights, liberties and government, they are defending; and were they not to do it, they would deserve to lose all, and none would pity them. The
fault

fault would be their own, and their punishment just.

The British army in America care not how long the war lasts. They enjoy an easy and indolent life. They fatten on the folly of one country, and the spoils of another ; and, between their plunder and their pay, may go home rich. But the case is very different with the labouring farmer, the working tradesman, and the necessitous poor in England, the sweat of whose brow goes day after day to feed, in prodigality and sloth, the army that is robbing both them and us. Removed from the eye of the country that supports them, and distant from the government that employs them, they cut and carve for themselves, and there is none to call them to account.

“ But England will be ruined,” says Lord Shelburne, “ if America is independent.”

Then, I say, is England already ruined,
for

for America is already independent: and if Lord Shelburne will not allow this, he immediately denies the fact which he infers. Besides, to make England the mere creature of America, is paying too great a compliment to us, and too little to himself.

But the declaration is a rhapsody of inconsistency. For to say, as Lord Shelburne has numberless times said, that the war against America is ruinous, and yet to continue the prosecution of that ruinous war for the purpose of avoiding ruin, is a language which cannot be understood. Neither is it possible to see how the Independence of America is to accomplish the ruin of England after the war is over, and yet not effect it before. America cannot be more independent of her, nor a greater enemy to her, hereafter, than she is now; nor England derive less advantages from her than at present. Why, then, is ruin to follow, in the best state of the case, and

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not

not in the worst? And if not in the worst, why is it to follow at all?

That a nation is to be ruined by peace and commerce, and fourteen or fifteen millions a-year less expences than before, is a new doctrine in politics. We have heard much clamour of national savings and œconomy; but surely the true œconomy would be, to save the whole charge of a silly, foolish, and headstrong war; because, compared with this, all other retrenchments are baubles and trifles.

But is it possible that Lord Shelburne can be serious in supposing the least advantage can be obtained by arms, or that any advantage can be equal to the expence, or the danger of attempting it? Will not the capture of one army after another satisfy him, but all must become prisoners? Must England ever be the sport of hope, and the dupe of delusion? Sometimes our currency was to fail; another time our army was

to disband : then whole provinces were to revolt. Such a General said this and that ; another wrote so and so. Lord Chatham was of this opinion, and Lord Somebody else of another. To day, twenty thousand Russians and twenty Russian ships of the line were to come ; to-morrow, the Empress was abused without mercy or decency. Then the Emperor of Germany was to be bribed with a million of money ; and the King of Prussia was to do wonderful things. At one time it was Lo here ! and then it was Lo there ! Sometimes this Power, and sometimes that Power, was to engage in the war, just as if the whole world was as mad and foolish as Britain. And thus, from year to year, has every straw been caught at, and every Will-with-a-wisp led them a new dance.

This year, a still newer folly is to take place. Lord Shelburne wishes to be sent to Congress, and he thinks that something may be done.

B 2

Are

Are not the repeated declarations of Congress, and which all America supports, that they will not even hear any proposals whatever, until the unconditional and unequivocal Independence of America is recognised ; are not, I say, these declarations answer enough ?

But for England to receive any thing from America now, after so many insults, injuries, and outrages, acted towards us, would shew such a spirit of meanness in her, that we could not but despise her for accepting it. And so far from Lord Shelburne coming here to solicit it, it would be the greatest disgrace we could do them to offer it. England would appear a wretch indeed, at this time of day, to ask or owe any thing to the bounty of America. Has not the name of Englishmen blots enough upon it, without inventing more ? Even Lucifer would scorn to reign in Heaven by permission, and yet an Englishman can creep for only an entrance into America.

America. Or, has a Land of Liberty so many charms, that, to be a door-keeper in it, is better than to be an English Minister of State?

But what can this expected something be? or, if obtained, what can it amount to, but new disgraces, contentions and quarrels? The people of America have for years accustomed themselves to think and speak so freely and contemptuously of English authority, and the inveteracy is so deeply rooted, that a person invested with any authority from that country, and attempting to exercise it here, would have the life of a toad under a harrow. They would look on him as an interloper, to whom their compassion permitted a residence. He would be no more than the Mungo of the Farce; and if he disliked that, he must set off. It would be a station of degradation, debased by our pity, and despised by our pride, and would place England in a more contemptible situation than any she

has yet suffered by the war. We have too high an opinion of ourselves, ever to think of yielding again the least obedience to outlandish authority: and, for a thousand reasons, England would be the last country in the world to yield it to. She has been treacherous; and we know it. Her character is gone; and we have seen the funeral.

Surely she loves to fish in troubled waters, and drink the cup of contention, or she would not now think of mingling her affairs with those of America. It would be like a foolish dotard taking to his arms the bride that despises him, or who has placed on his head the ensigns of her disgust. It is kissing the hand that boxes his ears, and proposing to renew the exchange. The thought is as servile as the war was wicked, and shews the last scene of the drama as inconsistent as the first.

As America is gone, the only act of man-
hood

hood is to *let her go*. Your Lordship had no hand in the separation, and you will gain no honour by temporising politics. Besides, there is something so exceedingly whimsical, unsteady, and even insincere, in the present conduct of England, that she exhibits herself in most dishonourable colours.

On the second of August last, General Carleton and Admiral Digby, wrote to General Washington in these words:

“ The resolutions of the House of Commons, of the 27th of February last, have
 “ been placed in your Excellency’s hands,
 “ and intimations given at the same time,
 “ that further pacific measures were likely
 “ to follow. Since which, until the present time, we have had no direct communications from England; but a mail is
 “ now arrived, which brings us very important information. We are acquainted, Sir, *by authority*, that negotiations

B 4

“ for

“ for a general peace have already com-
“ menced at Paris, and that Mr. Grenville
“ is invested with full powers to treat with
“ all the parties at war, and is now at Paris
“ in the execution of his commiffion. And
“ we are farther, Sir, made acquainted,
“ *that his Majesty, in order to remove all*
“ *obstacles to that peace which he fo ardently*
“ *wifhes to reftore, has commanded his Mini-*
“ *fters to direct Mr. Grenville, that the*
“ *Independence of the Thirteen United Pro-*
“ *vinces fhould be propofed by him in the*
“ *first inftance, inftead of making it a condi-*
“ *tion of a general treaty.*”

Now, taking your prefent meafures into view, and comparing them with the declaration in this Letter, pray, what is the word of your King or his Minifters, or the Parliament good for? Muft we not look upon you as a confederated body of faithlefs, treacherous men, whofe affurances are fraud, and their language deceit? What opinion can we poffibly form of you, but

that you are a lost, abandoned, profligate nation, who sport even with your own character, and are to be held by nothing but the bayonet or the halter?

To say, after this, *that the sun of Great Britain will be set whenever she acknowledges the Independence of America*, when the not doing it is the unqualified lie of Government, can be no other than the language of ridicule, the jargon of inconsistency. There were thousands in America who predicted the delusion, and looked upon it as a trick of treachery, to take us from our guard, and draw off our attention from the only system of finance, by which we can be called, or deserve to be called, a sovereign, independent people. The fraud on your part might be worth attempting, but the sacrifice to obtain it is too high.

There were others who credited the assurance, because they thought it impossible that men who had their characters to
establish

establish would begin it with a lie. The prosecution of the war, by the former Ministry, was savage and horrid ; since which, it has been mean, trickish and delusive. The one went greedily into the passion of revenge, the other into the subtleties of of low contrivance ; till, between the crimes of both, there is scarcely left a man in America, be he Whig or Tory, who does not despise or detest the conduct of Britain.

The management of Lord Shelburne, whatever may be his views, is a caution to us, and must be to the world, never to regard British assurances. A perfidy so notorious cannot be hid. It stands even in the public papers of New-York, with the names of Carleton and Digby affixed to it. It is a proclamation, that the King of England is not to be believed—that the spirit of lying is the governing principle of the Ministry. It is holding up the character of the House of Commons to public infamy,
and

and warning all men not to credit them. Such is the consequence which Lord Shelburne's management has brought upon his country.

After the authorised declarations contained in Carleton and Digby's letter, you ought, from every motive of honour, policy and prudence, to have fulfilled them, whatever might have been the event. It was the least atonement you could possibly make to America, and the greatest kindness you could do to yourselves; for you will save millions by a general peace, and you will lose as many by continuing the war.

COMMON SENSE.

PHILADELPHIA,

Oct. 29. 1782.

P. S.

P. S. The manuscript copy of this Letter is sent your Lordship, by the way of our Head-Quarters, to New-York, inclosing a late pamphlet of mine, addressed to the Abbe Raynal, which will serve to give your Lordship some idea of the principles and sentiments of America.

C. S.

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IV.

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(Translated from the French.)

PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.



THOUGHTS

ON THE

INDEPENDENCE of AMERICA,

&c. &c.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

THOUGHTS
ON THE
PEACE,
AND THE
PROBABLE ADVANTAGES THEREOF
TO THE
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By THOMAS PAINE,
AUTHOR OF THE WORKS ENTITLED, "RIGHTS OF MAN,"
"COMMON SENSE," "A LETTER TO THE ABBE RAYNAL,"
AND "A LETTER TO LORD SHELburne."

LONDON:
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MDCCXCI.

THOUGHTS,

&c. &c.

“THE times that tried men’s souls*” are over—and the greatest and completest Revolution the world ever knew, is gloriously and happily accomplished.

BUT, to pass from the extremes of danger to safety—from the tumult of war to the tranquillity of peace, though sweet in contemplation, requires a gradual compofure of the senses to receive it. Even calmness has the power of stunning, when it opens too in-

* “These are the times that try men’s souls.”

Crisis, No. 1, published Dec. 19, 1776.

stantly

stantly upon us. The long and raging hurricane that should cease in a moment, would leave us in a state rather of wonder than enjoyment; and some moments of récollection must pass, before we could be capable of tasting the full felicity of repose. There are but few instances in which the mind is fitted for sudden transitions; it takes in its pleasures by reflection and comparison, and those must have time to act, before the relish for new scenes is complete.

IN the present case—the mighty magnitude of the object—the various uncertainties of fate it has undergone—the numerous and complicated dangers we have suffered or escaped—the eminence we now stand on, and the vast prospect before us, must all conspire to impress us with contemplation.

To

To see it in our power to make a world happy—to teach mankind the art of being so—to exhibit on the theatre of the universe a character hitherto unknown—and to have, as it were, a new creation entrusted to our hands, are honours that command reflection, and can neither be too highly estimated, nor too gratefully received.

IN this pause then of recollection—while the storm is ceasing, and the long-agitated mind vibrating to a rest, let us look back on the scenes we have passed, and learn from experience what is yet to be done.

NEVER, I say, had a country so many openings to happiness as this. Her setting out into life, like the rising of a fair morning, was unclouded and promising. Her cause was good; her principles just and liberal;

beral; her temper serene and firm; her conduct regulated by the nicest steps of order; and every thing about her wore the mark of honour.

It is not every country (perhaps there is not another in the world) that can boast so fair an origin. Even the first settlement of America corresponds with the character of the Revolution. Rome, once the proud mistress of the universe, was originally a band of ruffians. Plunder and rapine made her rich, and her oppression of millions made her great. But America needs never be ashamed to tell her birth, nor relate the stages by which she rose to empire.

THE remembrance, then, of what is past, if it operates rightly, must inspire her with the most laudable of all ambition, that of
adding

adding to the fair fame she began with. The world has seen her great in adversity; struggling, without a thought of yielding, beneath accumulated difficulties; bravely, nay proudly, encountering distress, and rising in resolution as the storm increased. All this is justly due to her, for her fortitude has merited the character. Let, then, the world see that she can bear prosperity; and that her honest virtue in time of peace, is equal to the bravest virtue in time of war.

SHE is now descending to the scenes of quiet and domestic life; not beneath the cypress shade of disappointment, but to enjoy in her own land, and under her own vine, the sweets of her labours, and the reward of her toil. In this situation, may she never forget, that a fair national reputation

B

is

is of as much importance as independence; that it possesses a charm which wins upon the world, and makes even enemies civil; that it gives a dignity which is often superior to power, and commands a reverence where pomp and splendor fail.

IT would be a circumstance ever to be lamented, and never to be forgotten, were a single blot, from any cause whatever, suffered to fall on a Revolution, which, to the end of time, must be an honour to the age that accomplished it; and which has contributed more to enlighten the world, and diffuse a spirit of freedom and liberality among mankind, than any human event (if this can be called one) that ever preceded it.

IT is not among the least of the calamities of a long-continued war, that it unhinges

the mind from those nice sensations which at other times appear so amiable. The continual spectacle of woe blunts the finer feelings, and the necessity of bearing with the sight renders it familiar. In like manner are many of the moral obligations of society weakened, till the custom of acting by necessity, becomes an apology where it is truly a crime. Yet let but a nation conceive rightly of its character, and it will be chastely just in protecting it. None ever began with a fairer than America, and none can be under a greater obligation to preserve it.

THE Debt which America has contracted, compared with the Cause she has gained, and the advantages to flow from it, ought scarcely to be mentioned. She has it in her choice to do, and to live, as happily as she pleases. The world is in her hands. She has now

no Foreign Power to monopolize her Commerce, perplex her Legislation, or controul her Prosperity. The struggle is over which must one day have happened, and, perhaps, never could have happened at a better time*; and instead of a domineering Master, she has gained an Ally, whose exemplary greatness,
and

* That the Revolution began at the exact period of time best fitted to the purpose, is sufficiently proved by the event.—But the great hinge on which the whole machine turned, is the *Union of the States*; and this Union was naturally produced by the inability of any one State to support itself against a foreign enemy, without the assistance of the rest.

Had the States severally been less able than they were when the war began, their united strength would not have been equal to the undertaking, and they must, in all human probability, have failed.—And on the other hand, had they severally been more able, they might not have seen, or, what is more, might not have felt the necessity of uniting; and, either by attempting to stand alone, or in small confederacies, would have been separately conquered.

Now,]

and universal liberality, have extorted a confession even from her enemies.

WITH

Now, as we cannot see a time (and many years must pass away before it can arrive) when the strength of any one State, or of several united, can be equal to the whole of the present United States; and as we have seen the extreme difficulty of collectively prosecuting the war to a successful issue, and preserving our national importance in the world; therefore, from the experience we have had, and the knowledge we have gained, we must, unless we make a waste of wisdom, be strongly impressed with the advantage, as well as the necessity, of strengthening the happy Union which has been our salvation, and without which we should have been a ruined people.

While I was writing this note, I cast my eye on the pamphlet *Common Sense*, from which I shall make an extract, as it applies exactly to the case. It is as follows:

“ I have never met with a man, either in England or
 “ America, who hath not confessed his opinion, that a separation between the countries would take place one time or
 “ other: and there is no instance in which we have shewn
 “ less judgement, than endeavouring to describe, what
 “ we call, the ripeness or fitness of the Continent for
 “ Independence.

“ As all men allow the measure, and differ only in their
 “ opinion of the time, let us, in order to remove mistakes,
 “ take

WITH the blessings of Peace, Independence, and an universal Commerce, the States, individually and collectively, will have leisure and opportunity to regulate and establish their domestic concerns, and to put it beyond the power of calumny to throw the least reflection on their honour. Character is much easier kept than recovered; and that man, if any such there be, who, from any sinister views, or littleness of soul, lends unseen his hand to injure it, con-

“ take a general survey of things, and endeavour, if possible, to find out the *very time*. But we need not go far; the enquiry ceases at once, for *the time hath found us*. The general concurrence, the glorious union of all things, prove the fact.

“ It is not in numbers, but in an Union, that our great strength lies. The Continent is just arrived at that pitch of strength, in which no single colony is able to support itself, and the whole, when united, can accomplish the matter: and either more or less than this, might be fatal in its effects.”

Pamphlet, Common Sense.

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trives a wound it will never be in his power to heal.

As we have established an Inheritance for Posterity, let that Inheritance descend with every mark of an honourable conveyance. The little it will cost, compared with the worth of the States, the greatness of the object, and the value of national character, will be a profitable exchange.

BUT that which must more forcibly strike a thoughtful penetrating mind, and which includes and renders easy all inferior concerns, is the *Union of the States*. On this our great national character depends. It is this which must give us importance abroad and security at home. It is through this only that we are, or can be nationally known in the world. It is the flag of the
United

United States which renders our ships and commerce safe on the seas, or in a foreign port. Our Mediterranean passes must be obtained under the same style. All our treaties, whether of alliance, peace, or commerce, are formed under the Sovereignty of the United States, and Europe knows us by no other name or title.

THE division of the Empire into States is for our own convenience, but abroad this distinction ceases. The affairs of each State are local. They can go no farther than to itself; and were the whole worth of even the richest of them expended in revenue, it would not be sufficient to support Sovereignty against a foreign attack. In short, we have no other national sovereignty than as United States. It would even be fatal for

us if we had—too expensive to be maintained, and impossible to be supported. Individuals, or Individual States, may call themselves what they please; but the world, and especially the world of enemies, is not to be held in awe by the whistling of a name. Sovereignty must have power to protect all the parts which compose and constitute it: and as *United States*, we are equal to the importance of the title, but otherwise we are not. Our Union, well and wisely regulated and cemented, is the cheapest way of being great—the easiest way of being powerful—and the happiest invention in government which the circumstances of America can admit of; because it collects from each State, that which, by being inadequate, can be of no use to it, and forms an aggregate that serves for all.

THE States of Holland are an unfortunate instance of the effects of individual sovereignty. Their disjointed condition exposes them to numerous intrigues, losses, calamities, and enemies, and the almost impossibility of bringing their measures to a decision; and that decision into execution, is to them, and would be to us, a source of endless misfortune.

IT is with confederate States as with individuals in society: something must be yielded up, to make the whole secure. In this view of things we gain by what we give, and draw an annual interest greater than the capital. I ever feel myself hurt, when I hear the Union, that great palladium of our liberty and safety, the least irreverently spoken of. It is the most sacred thing in the constitution of America, and that which every
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man should be the most proud and tender of. Our citizenship in the United States is our national character: our citizenship in any particular State is only our local distinction. By the latter we are known at home; by the former to the world. Our great title is *Americans*; our inferior one varies with the place.

So far as my endeavours could go, they have all been directed to conciliate the affections, unite the interests, and draw and keep the mind of the country together; and the better to assist in this foundation-work of the Revolution, I have avoided all places of profit or office, either in the State I live in, or in the United States; kept myself at a distance from all parties and party connections, and even disregarded all private and inferior con-

cerns:

cerns: and when we take into view the great work we have gone through, and feel, as we ought to feel, the just importance of it, we shall then see, that the little wranglings and indecent contentions of personal party, are as dishonourable to our characters, as they are injurious to our repose.

It was the cause of America that made me an author. The force with which it struck my mind, and the dangerous condition the country appeared to me in, by courting an impossible and unnatural reconciliation with those who were determined to reduce her, instead of striking out into the only line that could cement and save her, *A Declaration of Independence*—made it impossible for me, feeling as I did, to be silent: and if, in the course of more than seven years, I have rendered
her

her any service, I have likewise added something to the reputation of literature, by freely and disinterestedly employing it in the great cause of mankind, and shewing there may be genius without prostitution.

INDEPENDENCE always appeared to me practicable and probable, provided the sentiment of the country could be formed and held to the object: and there is no instance in the world, where a people so extended, and wedded to former habits of thinking, and under such a variety of circumstances, were so instantly and effectually pervaded, by a turn in politics, as in the case of Independence, and who supported their opinion, undiminished, through such a succession of good and ill fortune, till they crowned it with success.

BUT

BUT as the scenes of war are closed, and every man preparing for home and happier times, I therefore take my leave of the subject. I have most sincerely followed it from beginning to end, and through all its turns and windings: and whatever country I may hereafter be in, I shall always feel an honest pride at the part I have taken and acted, and a gratitude to Nature and Providence for putting it in my power to be of some use to mankind.

Philadelphia, April 19, 1783.

A P P E N -

A P P E N D I X.

THE two following Letters were first published in England in the Morning Post.

TO THE AUTHORS OF
THE REPUBLICAN.

GENTLEMEN,

M. DUCHASTELET has mentioned to me the intention of some persons to commence a Work under the title of *The Republican*.

As I am a Citizen of a country which knows no other Majesty than that of the People—no other Government than that of the Representative body—no other Sovereignty than that of the Laws, and which is attached to *France* both by Alliance and by Gratitude, I voluntarily offer you my services in support of principles, as honourable to a nation, as they are adapted to promote the happiness of mankind. I offer them to you with the more zeal, as I know the moral, literary, and political character of those who are engaged in the undertaking,

undertaking, and find myself honoured in their good opinion.

But I must at the same time observe, that from my ignorance of the French language, my works must necessarily undergo a translation; they can of course be but of little utility, and my offering must consist more of wishes than services—I must add, that I am obliged to pass a part of this summer in England and Ireland.

As the public has done me the unmerited favour of recognizing me under the appellation of “Common Sense,” which is my usual signature, I shall continue it in this publication, to avoid mistakes, and to prevent my being supposed the author of works not my own. As to my Political Principles, I shall endeavour, in this letter, to trace their general features in such a manner, as that they cannot be misunderstood.

It is desirable, in most instances, to avoid that which may give even the least suspicion with respect to the part meant to be adopted; and particularly on the present occasion, where a perfect clearness of expression is necessary to the avoidance of any possible misinterpretation. I am happy, therefore, to find, that the work in question is entitled “*The Republican*.” This word expresses perfectly the idea which we ought to have of Government in general—*Res Publica*—The public affairs of a Nation.

As to the word *Monarchy*, though the address and intrigue of Courts have rendered it familiar, it does not contain the less of reproach or of insult to a nation. The word, in its immediate and original sense, signifies *the absolute Power of a single Individual*, who may prove a fool, an hypocrite, or a tyrant. The appellation admits of no other interpretation than that which is here given. *France* is therefore not a *Monarchy*; it is insulted when called by that name. The servile spirit which characterises this species of Government, is banished from *FRANCE*; and this country, like *AMERICA*, can now afford to Monarchy no more than a glance of disdain.

Of the errors which monarchic ignorance or knavery has spread through the world; the one, which bears the marks of the most dexterous invention, is the opinion that the system of *Republicanism* is only adapted to a small country, and that a *Monarchy* is suited, on the contrary, to those of greater extent. Such is the language of Courts, and such the sentiments which they have caused to be adopted in monarchic countries; but the opinion is contrary at the same time to principle and to experience.

The Government, to be of real use, should possess a complete knowledge of all the parties—all the circumstances, and all the interests of a nation. The monarchic system, in consequence, in-

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stead

stead of being suited to a country of great extent, would be more admissible in a small territory, where an individual may be supposed to know the affairs and the interests of the whole. But when it is attempted to extend this individual knowledge to the affairs of a great country, the capacity of knowing bears no longer any proportion to the extent or multiplicity of the objects which ought to be known, and the Government inevitably falls from ignorance into tyranny. For the proof of this position we need only look to SPAIN, RUSSIA, GERMANY, TURKEY, and the whole of the Eastern Continent—Countries for the deliverance of which I offer my most sincere wishes.

On the contrary, the true *Republican* system, by Election and Representation, offers the only means which are known, and in my opinion the only means which are possible of proportioning the wisdom and the information of a Government to the extent of a country.

The system of *Representation* is the strongest and most powerful center that can be devised for a nation. Its attraction acts so powerfully, that men give it their approbation even without reasoning on the cause; and FRANCE, however distant its several parts, finds itself at this moment *an Whole* in its *central* Representation. The citizen is assured that his rights are protected, and the soldier feels that he is no longer the Slave of a Despot,
but

but that he is become one of the Nation, and interested of course in its defence.

The states at present styled *Republican*, as HOLLAND, GENOA, VENICE, BERNE, &c. are not only unworthy of the name, but are actually in opposition to every Principle of a *Republican* Government; and the countries submitted to their power are, truly speaking, subjected to an *Aristocratic* Slavery!

It is, perhaps, impossible in the first steps which are made in a Revolution, to avoid all kind of error in principle or in practice, or in some instances to prevent the combination of both. Before the sense of a nation is sufficiently enlightened, and before men have entered into the habits of a free communication with each other of their natural thoughts, a certain reserve—a timid prudence seizes on the human mind, and prevents it from attaining its level, with that vigour and promptitude which belongs to *Right*.—An example of this influence discovers itself in the commencement of the present Revolution: but happily this discovery has been made before the Constitution was completed, and in time to provide a remedy.

The *Hereditary Succession* can never exist as a matter of *right*; it is a *nullity*—a *nothing*. To admit the idea, is to regard men as a species of property belonging to some individuals, either born or to be born! It is to consider our descendents,

and all posterity, as mere animals without a Right or Will! It is, in fine, the most base and humiliating idea that ever degraded the human species, and which, for the honour of Humanity, should be destroyed for ever.

The idea of hereditary succession is so contrary to the Rights of Man, that if we were ourselves to be recalled to existence, instead of being replaced by our posterity, we should not have the right of depriving ourselves beforehand of those *Rights* which would then properly belong to us. On what ground, then, or by what authority, do we dare to deprive of their rights those children who will soon be men? Why are we not struck with the injustice which we perpetrate on our descendants, by endeavouring to transmit them as a vile herd, to masters whose vices are all that can be foreseen?

Whenever the *French* Constitution shall be rendered conformable to its *Declaration of Rights*, we shall then be enabled to give to FRANCE, and with justice, the appellation of a *civic Empire*; for its government will be the empire of Laws founded on the great republican principles of *Elective Representation*, and the *Rights of Man*.—But Monarchy and Hereditary Succession are incompatible with the *basis* of its constitution.

I hope that I have at present sufficiently proved to you that I am a good republican; and I have
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such a confidence in the truth of these principles, that I doubt not they will soon be as universal in *France* as in *America*. The pride of human nature will assist their evidence, will contribute to their establishment, and Men will be ashamed of Monarchy.

I am, with respect,

Gentlemen,

Your friend,

THOMAS PAINE.

LETTER

L E T T E R
TO THE
A B B E S Y E Y E S.

Paris, 8th July, 1791.

SIR,

“AT the moment of my departure for England, I read, in the *Moniteur* of Tuesday last, your letter, in which you give the challenge, on the subject of Government, and offer to defend what is called the *Monarchical opinion* against the Republican system.

“ I accept of your challenge with pleasure ; and I place such a confidence in the superiority of the Republican System over that nullity of system, called *Monarchy*, that I engage not to exceed the extent of fifty pages, and to leave you the liberty of taking as much latitude as you may think proper.

“ The respect which I bear your moral and literary reputation, will be your security for my candour in the course of this discussion ; but, notwithstanding that I shall treat the subject seriously and sincerely, let me premise, that I consider myself at liberty to ridicule, as they deserve, Monarchical absurdities, whensoever the occasion shall present itself.

“ By

“ By republicanism, I do not understand what the name signifies in Holland, and in some parts of Italy. I understand simply a government by representation—a government founded upon the principles of the Declaration of Rights; principles to which several parts of the French Constitution arise in contradiction. The Declarations of the Rights of France and America are but one and the same thing in principles, and almost in expressions; and this is the Republicanism which I undertake to defend against what is called *Monarchy* and *Aristocracy*.

“ I see with pleasure, that in respect to one point, we are already agreed; and *that is the extreme danger of a Civil List of thirty millions*. I can discover no reason why one of the parts of the government should be supported with so extravagant a profusion, whilst the other scarcely receives what is sufficient for its common wants.

“ This dangerous and dishonourable disproportion at once supplies the one with the means of corrupting, and throws the other into the predicament of being corrupted. In America there is but little difference, with regard to this point, between the legislative and the executive part of our government; but the first is much better attended to than it is in France*.

* A Deputy to the Congress receives about a guinea and a half daily; and provisions are cheaper in America than in France.

“In whatsoever manner, Sir, I may treat the subject of which you have proposed the investigation, I hope that you will not doubt my entertaining for you the highest esteem. I must also add, that I am not the personal enemy of Kings. Quite the contrary. No man more heartily wishes than myself to see them all in the happy and honourable state of private individuals; but I am the avowed, open, and intrepid enemy of what is called Monarchy; and I am such by principles which nothing can either alter or corrupt—by my attachment to humanity; by the anxiety which I feel within myself for the dignity and the honour of the human race; by the disgust which I experience, when I observed men directed by children, and governed by brutes; by the horror which all the evils that Monarchy has spread over the earth excite within my breast; and by those sentiments which make me shudder at the calamities, the exactions, the wars, and the massacres with which Monarchy has crushed mankind: in short, it is against all the Hell of Monarchy that I have declared war.

(Signed) THOMAS PAINE.”

F I N I S.

SIXTH EDITION.

TWO LETTERS
TO
LORD ONSLOW,

LORD LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTY OF SURRY:

AND ONE TO
Mr. HENRY DUNDAS,
SECRETARY OF STATE,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE LATE *EXCELLENT*

PROCLAMATION.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE PATRIOTIC PAPER OF
THE ARGUS.

BY

THOMAS PAINE,

AUTHOR OF COMMON SENSE, A LETTER TO THE ABBE RAYNAL,
A LETTER TO THE MARQUIS OF LANDSDOWN, AND RIGHTS
OF MAN.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JAMES RIDGWAY, YORK-STREET,
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1792.

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T O

Mr. HENRY DUNDAS

SIR,

London, June 6, 1792.

AS you opened the debate in the House of Commons, May 25th, on the Proclamation for suppressing Publications, which that Proclamation (without naming any) calls wicked and seditious, and as you applied those opprobrious epithets to the works entitled "RIGHTS OF MAN," I think it unnecessary to offer any other reason for addressing this Letter to you.

I begin, then, at once, by declaring that I do not believe there are to be found in the writings of any author, ancient or modern, on the subject of Government, a spirit of greater benignity, and a stronger inculcation of moral

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principles

principles than in those which I have published. They come, Sir, from a man, who, by having lived in different countries, and under different systems of Government, and who, being intimate in the construction of them, is a better judge of the subject than it is possible that you, from the want of those opportunities, can be :—And, besides this, they come from an heart that knows not how to beguile.

I will further say, that when that moment arrives in which the best consolation that shall be left will be that of looking back on some past actions, more virtuous, more meritorious, than the rest, I shall then with happiness remember, among other things, I have written the RIGHTS OF MAN.—As to what Proclamations, or Prosecutions, or Place-men, or Place-expectants—those who possess, or those who are gaping for office, may say of them, it will not alter their character, either with the world or with me.

Having, Sir, made this declaration, I shall proceed to remark, not particularly upon your own Speech on that occasion, but on any other Speech to which your Motion on that day gave rise; and I shall begin with that of Mr. ADAM.

This Gentleman accuses me of *not* having done the very thing that *I have done*, and which, he says, if *I had* done, he should not have accused me.

Mr.

Mr. ADAM, in his Speech, (see the Morning Chronicle of May 26,) says, “ That he
 “ had well considered the subject of Constitu-
 “ tional Publications, and was by no means
 “ ready to say (but the contrary) that books
 “ of science upon Government, though re-
 “ commending a doctrine or system different
 “ from the form of our Constitution, (meaning
 “ that of England) were fit objects of prose-
 “ cution; that if he did, he must condemn
 “ (which he meant not to do) HARRING-
 “ TON for his Oceana, SIR THOMAS MORE
 “ for his Eutopia, and HUME for his Idea of
 “ a perfect Common-wealth. But, (conti-
 “ nued Mr. Adam,) the Publication of Mr.
 “ PAINE was very different; for it reviled
 “ what was *most sacred* in the Constitution,
 “ destroyed every principle of subordination,
 “ and *established nothing in their room.*”

I readily perceive that Mr. ADAM had not read the *Second Part of Rights of Man*, and I am put under the necessity, either of submitting to an erroneous charge, or of justifying myself against it; and I certainly shall prefer the latter.—If, then, I shall prove to Mr. ADAM, that, in my reasoning upon Systems of Government in the *Second Part of Rights of Man*, I have shewn as clearly, I think, as words can convey ideas, a certain System of Government, and that not existing in theory only, but already in full and established practice, and systematically and practically
 free

free from all the vices and defects of the English Government, and capable of producing more happiness to the People, and that also with an eightieth part of the Taxes, which the present System of English Government consumes; I hope he will do me the justice when he next goes to the House, to get up and confess he had been mistaken in saying, that I had *established nothing, and that I had destroyed every principle of subordination*. Having thus opened the case, I now come to the point.

In the Second Part of RIGHTS OF MAN, I have distinguished Government into two classes or systems; the one the hereditary system; the other the representative system.

In the First Part of *Rights of Man*, I have endeavoured to shew, and I challenge any man to refute it, that there does not exist a right to establish Hereditary Government; or, in other words, Hereditary Governors; because Hereditary Government always means a Government yet to come, and the case always is, that the People who are to live afterwards, have always the same right to chuse a Government for themselves, as the people had who lived before them.

In the Second Part of *Rights of Man*, I have not repeated those arguments, because they are irrefutable; but have confined myself to shew the defects of what is called Hereditary Government, or Hereditary Succession;
that

that it must, from the nature of it, throw Government into the hands of men totally unworthy of it, from want of principle, or unfitted for it from want of capacity.—James the II^d. is recorded as an instance of the first of these cases; and instances are to be found almost all over Europe to prove the truth of the latter.

To shew the absurdity of the Hereditary System still more strongly, I will now put the following case:—Take any fifty men promiscuously, and it will be very extraordinary, if out of that number, one man should be found, whose principles and talents taken together, (for some might have principles, and others have talents) would render him a person truly fitted to fill any very extraordinary office of National Trust. If, then, such a fitness of character could not be expected to be found in more than one person out of fifty, it would happen but once in a thousand years to the eldest son of any one family, admitting each, on an average, to hold the office twenty years. Mr. Adam talks of something in the Constitution which he calls *most sacred*; but I hope he does not mean hereditary succession, a thing which appears to me a violation of every order of nature, and of common sense.

When I look into History, and see the multitudes of men, otherwise virtuous, who have died, and their families been ruined, in defence of knaves and fools, and which they would not
have

have done, had they reasoned at all upon the system; I do not know a greater good that an individual can render to mankind, than to endeavour to break the chains of political superstition. Those chains are now dissolving fast, and proclamations and prosecutions will serve but to hasten that dissolution.

Having thus spoken of the Hereditary System as a bad system, and subject to every possible defect; I now come to the Representative System; and this Mr. ADAM will find stated in the Second Part of Rights of Man, not only as the best, but as the only *Theory* of Government under which the liberties of a people can be permanently secure.

But it is needless now to talk of mere Theory, since there is already a Government in full practice, established upon that Theory, or in other words, upon the Rights of Man, and has been so for almost twenty years. Mr. Pitt, in a speech of his some short time since, said, "That there never did, and never could exist a Government established upon those Rights, and that if it began at noon, it would end at night." Mr. Pitt is not yet arrived at the degree of a school-boy in this species of knowledge. His practice has been confined to the means of *extorting revenue*, and his boast has been—*how much?* Whereas the boast of the System of Government that I am speaking of, is not how much, but how little.

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The System of Government purely representative, unmixed with any thing of hereditary nonsense, began in America. I will now compare the effects of that system of Government with the system of Government in England, both during, and since the close of the war.

So powerful is the Representative System; first, by combining and consolidating all the parts of a country together, however great the extent; and secondly, by admitting of none but men properly qualified into the Government, or dismissing them if they prove to be otherwise, that America was enabled thereby totally to defeat and overthrow all the schemes and projects of the Hereditary Government of England against her. As the establishment of the Revolution and Independence of America is a proof of this fact, it is needless to enlarge upon it.

I now come to the comparative effect of the two Systems *since* the close of the war, and I request Mr. Adam to attend to it.

America had internally sustained the ravage of upwards of seven years of war, which England had not. England sustained only the expence of the war; whereas America sustained, not only the expence, but the destruction of property committed by *both* armies. Not a house was built during that period, and many thousands were destroyed. The farms and plantations along the coast of the country,

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for

for more than a thousand miles, were laid waste. Her commerce was annihilated. Her ships were either taken or had rotted within her own harbour. The credit of her funds had fallen upwards of ninety per cent. that is, an original hundred pounds would not sell for ten pounds. In fine, she was apparently put back an hundred years when the war closed ; which was not the case with England.

But such was the event, that the same Representative System of Government, though since better organized, which enabled her to conquer, enabled her also to recover ; and she now presents a more flourishing condition, and a more happy and harmonized society under that system of Government, than any country in the world can boast under any other. Her towns are rebuilt, much better than before ; her farms and plantations are in higher improvement than ever ; her commerce is spread over the world, and her funds have risen from less than ten pounds the hundred to upwards of one hundred and twenty. Mr. Pitt, and his colleagues, talk of the things that have happened in his boyish Administration, without knowing what greater things have happened elsewhere, and under other systems of Government.

I next come to state the expence of the two systems, as they now stand in each of the countries ; but it may first be proper to observe, that Government in America is what it ought

ought to be, a matter of honour and trust, and not made a trade of for the purpose of lucre.

The whole amount of the nett taxes in England (exclusive of the expence of collection, of drawbacks, of seizures and condemnations, of fines and penalties, of fees of office, of litigations and informers, which are some of the blessed means of enforcing them) is, seventeen millions. Of this sum, about nine millions go for the payment of the interest of the National Debt, and the remainder, being about eight millions, is for the current annual expences. Thus much for one side of the case. I now come to the other.

The expence of all the several departments of the general Representative Government of the United States of America, extending over a space of country nearly ten times larger than England, is two hundred and ninety-four thousand, five hundred and fifty-eight dollars, which, at 4s. 6d. per dollar, is 66,275l. 11s. sterling, and is thus apportioned.

Expence of the Executive Department.

The Office of the Presidency, at which the President receives nothing for himself	-	-	-	1.	s.
Vice President	-	-	-	5,625	0
Chief Justice	-	-	-	1,125	0
Five associate Justices	-	-	-	900	0
Nineteen Judges of Districts and Attorney General	-	-	-	3,937	10
				6,873	15

Legislative Department.

Members of Congress at six dollars (1l. 7s.) per day,					
their Secretaries, Clerks Chaplains, Messengers,					
Door-keepers, &c.	-	-	-	25,515	0

Treasury Department.

Secretary, Assistant, Comptroller, Auditor, Treasurer, Register, and Loan-Office-Keeper, in each State, together with all necessary Clerks, Office-Keepers, &c.	-	-	-	12,825	0
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Department of State, including Foreign affairs.

Secretary, Clerks, &c. &c.	-	-	1,406	5
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Department of War.

Secretary, Clerks, Paymasters, Commissioner, &c.	1,462	10
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Commissioners for settling Old Accounts.

The whole Board, Clerks, &c.	-	-	2,598	15
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Incidental and Contingent Expences.

For Fire-wood, Stationary, Printing, &c.	4,006	16
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Total	-	66,275	11
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On account of the incursions of the Indians on the back settlements, Congress is, at this time, obliged to keep six thousand militia in pay, in addition to a regiment of foot, and a battalion of artillery, which it always keeps ; and this increases the expence of the War Department to 390,000 dollars, which is 87,795l. sterling, but when Peace shall be concluded with the Indians, the greatest part of this expence will cease, and the total amount of the expence of Government, including that of the army, will not amount to one hundred thousand pounds sterling, which, as has been already stated, is but an eightieth part of the expences of the English Government.

I request Mr. Adam and Mr. Dundas, and all those who are talking of Constitutions, and
 blessings,

blessings, and Kings, and Lords, and the Lord knows what, to look at this statement. Here is a form and system of Government, that is better organized and better administered than any Government in the world, and that for less than one hundred thousand pounds per annum, and yet every Member of Congress receives, as a compensation for his time and attendance on public business, one pound seven shillings per day, which is at the rate of nearly five hundred pounds a year.

This is a government that has nothing to fear. It needs no proclamations to deter people from writing and reading. It needs no political superstition to support it. It was by encouraging discussion, and rendering the press free upon all subjects of Government, that the principles of Government became understood in America, and the people are now enjoying the present blessings under it. You hear of no riots, tumults, and disorders in that country ; because there exists no cause to produce them. Those things are never the effect of Freedom, but of restraint, oppression, and excessive taxation.

In America there is not that class of poor and wretched people that are so numerously dispersed all over England, and who are to be told by a Proclamation, that they are happy ; and this is in a great measure to be accounted for, not by the difference of Proclamations, but by the difference of Governments and the difference

difference of Taxes between that country and this. What the labouring people of that country earn they apply to their own use, and to the education of their children, and do not pay it away in Taxes as fast they earn it, to support Court extravagance, and a long enormous list of Place-men and pensioners; and besides this, they have learned the manly doctrine of reverencing themselves, and consequently of respecting each other; and they laugh at those imaginary beings called Kings and Lords, and all the fraudulent trumpery of Courts.

When Place-men and Pensioners, or those who expect to be such, are lavish in praise of a Government, it is not a sign of its being a good one. The pension list alone, in England, (see Sir John Sinclair's History of the Revenue, page 6, of the Appendix,) is One Hundred and seven thousand Four Hundred and Four Pounds, *which is more than the expences of the whole Government of America amount to.* And I am now more convinced than before, that the offer that was made to me of a Thousand Pounds, for the copy-right of the Second Part of the *Rights of Man*, together with the remaining copy-right of the First Part, was to have effected, by a quick suppression, what is now attempted to be done by a Prosecution. The connection which the person who made that offer has with the King's Printing Office, may furnish part of the means of enquiring
I into

into this affair, when the Ministry shall please to bring their Prosecution to issue. But to return to my subject.—

I have said, in the Second Part of *Rights of Man*, and I repeat it here, that the service of any man, whether called King, President, Senator, Legislator, or any thing else, cannot be worth more to any country, in the regular routine of office, than Ten Thousand Pounds per annum. We have a better man in America, and more of a Gentleman than any King I ever knew of, who does not occasion even half that expence; for, though the salary is fixed at Five Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty-Five Pounds, he does not accept it, and it is only the incidental expences that are paid out of it. The name by which a man is called is, of itself, but an empty thing. It is worth and character alone which can render him valuable, for without these, Kings, and Lords, and Presidents are but jingling names.

But without troubling myself about Constitutions of Government, I have shewn, in the Second Part of *Rights of Man*, that an alliance may be formed between England, France, and America, and that the expences of Government in England may be put back to one million and an half, viz.

Civil expence of Government,	.	£. 500,000
Army,	-	500,000
Navy,	-	500,000
		<hr/>
		1,500,000
		And

And even this sum is fifteen times greater than the expences of Government are in America ; and it is alſo greater than the whole peace eſtabliſhment of England amounted to about an hundred years ago. So much has the weight and oppreſſion of Taxes encreaſed ſince the Revolution, and eſpecially ſince the year 1714.

To ſhew that the ſum of 500,000l. is ſufficient to defray all the civil expences of Government, I have, in that work, annexed the following eſtimate for any country of the ſame extent as England :

In the firſt place, three hundred Representatives, fairly elected, are ſufficient for all the purpoſes to which Legislation can apply, and preferable to a larger number.

If then an allowance, at the rate of five hundred pounds per ann. be made to every Representative, deducting for non-attendance, the expence, if the whole number attended fix months each year, would be £. 75,000

The Official Departments could not poſſibly exceed the following number, with the ſalaries annexed, viz.

Three Offices,	at 10,000l. each,	-	30,000
Ten ditto,	at 5,000l. each,	-	50,000
Twenty ditto,	at 2,000l. each,	-	40,000
Forty ditto,	at 1,000l. each,	-	40,000
Two hundred ditto,	at 500l. each,	-	100,000
Three hundred ditto,	at 200l. each,	-	60,000
Five hundred ditto,	at 100l. each,	-	50,000
Seven hundred ditto,	at 75l. each,	-	52,500

£. 497,500
If

If a Nation chose, it might deduct four per cent. from all the offices, and make one of twenty thousand pounds per annum, and style the person who should fill it, King, or Majesty; or Madjesty, or give him any other title.

Taking, however, this sum of one million and an half as an abundant supply for all the expences of Government under any form whatever, there will remain a surplus of nearly six millions and a half out of the present Taxes, after paying the interest of the National Debt; and I have shewn, in the Second Part of *Rights of Man*, what appears to me the best mode of applying the surplus money; for I am now speaking of expences and savings, and not of systems of Government.

I have in the first place, estimated the poor-rates at two millions annually, and shewn that the first effectual step would be to abolish the poor-rates entirely, (which would be a saving of two millions to the house-keepers), and to remit four millions out of the surplus taxes to the poor to be paid to them in money in proportion to the number of children in each family, and the number of aged persons.

I have estimated the number of persons of both sexes in England, of fifty years of age and upwards, at 420,000, and have taken one-third of this number, viz. 140,000, to be poor people.

To save long calculations, I have taken 70,000 of them to be upwards of fifty years of age and under sixty, and the other to be sixty years and upwards; and to allow six pounds per ann. to the former class, and ten pounds per ann. to the latter. The expence of which will be,

Seventy thousand persons at 6l. per ann.	420,000
Seventy thousand persons at 10l. per ann.	700,000
	<hr/>
	£. 1,120,000

There will then remain of the four millions 2,880,000l. I have stated two different methods of appropriating this money. The one is to pay it in proportion to the number of children in each family, at the rate of three or four pounds per ann. for each child; the other is, to apportion it according to the expence of living in different counties; but in either of these cases it would, together with the allowance to be made to the aged, completely take off taxes from one-third of all the families in England, besides relieving all the other families from the burthen of poor-rates.

The whole number of families in England, lotting five souls to each family, is one million four hundred thousand, of which I take one third, viz. 466,666 to be poor families, who now pay four millions of taxes, and that the poorest pays at least four guineas a year; and that

that the other thirteen millions are paid by the other two-thirds. The plan, therefore, as stated in the work is, first, to remit or repay, as is already stated, this sum of four millions to the poor, because it is impossible to separate them from the others in the present mode of collecting taxes on articles of consumption; and, secondly, to abolish the poor-rates, the house and window-light tax, and to change the Commutation Tax into a progressive Tax on large estates, the particulars of all which are set forth in the work, and to which I desire Mr. ADAM to refer for particulars. I shall here content myself with saying, that to a town of the population of Manchester, it will make a difference in its favour, compared with the present state of things, of upwards of fifty thousand pounds annually, and so in proportion to all other places throughout the nation. This certainly is of more consequence, than that the same sums should be collected to be afterwards spent by riotous and profligate courtiers, and in nightly revels at the Star and Garter Tavern, Pall Mall.

I will conclude this part of my letter with an extract from the Second Part of *Rights of Man*, which Mr. Dundas (a man rolling in luxury at the expence of the nation) has branded with the epithet of "wicked."

"By the operation of this plan, the poor laws, those instruments of civil torture, will

“ be superseded, and the wasteful expence of
 “ litigation prevented. The hearts of the
 “ humane will not be shocked by ragged and
 “ hungry children, and persons of seventy and
 “ eighty years of age begging for bread. The
 “ dying poor will not be dragged from place
 “ to place, to breathe their last, as a reprisal
 “ of parish upon parish. Widows will have
 “ a maintenance for their children, and not be
 “ carted away, on the death of their husbands
 “ like culprits and criminals, and children will
 “ no longer be considered as increasing the
 “ distresses of their parents. The haunts of
 “ the wretched will be known, because it will
 “ be to their advantage, and the number of
 “ petty crimes, the offspring of poverty and
 “ distress, will be lessened. The poor, as well
 “ as the rich, will then be interested in the
 “ support of Government, and the cause and
 “ apprehension of riots and tumults will cease.
 “ Ye who sit in ease, and solace yourselves in
 “ plenty, and such there are in Turkey and
 “ Russia as well as in England, and who say
 “ to yourselves, *are we not well off?* have ye
 “ thought of these things? When ye do,
 “ ye will cease to speak and feel for your-
 “ selves alone.”—Rights of Man, Part II.
 p. 136.

After this remission of four millions be
 made, and the poor Rates and House and
 Window-light Tax be abolished, and the

Com-

Commutation Tax changed, there will still remain nearly one million and an half of surplus Taxes; and as by an alliance between England, France, and America, armies and navies will, in a great measure be rendered unnecessary; and as men who have either been brought up in, or long habited to, those lines of life, are still citizens of a nation in common with the rest, and have a right to participate in all plans of National benefit, it is stated in that work (Rights of Man, Part II.) to apply annually 507,000*l.* out of the surplus taxes to this purpose in the following manner:

To fifteen thousand disbanded soldiers, 3 <i>s.</i> per week each (clear of deductions) during life	117,000
Additional pay to the remaining soldiers, per ann.	19,500
To the officers of the disbanded corps, during life, the same sum of - - - -	117,000
To fifteen thousand disbanded sailors, 3 <i>s.</i> per week, during life - - - -	117,000
Additional pay to the remaining sailors - -	19,500
To the officers of the disbanded part of the navy, during life - - - -	117,000
	<hr/>
	£. 507,000

The limits to which it is proper to confine this letter, will not admit of my entering into further particulars. I address it to Mr. Dundas because he took the lead in the debate, and he wishes, I suppose, to appear conspicuous; but the

the purport of it is to justify myself from the charge which Mr. Adam has made.

This Gentleman, as has been observed in the beginning of this Letter, considers the writings of Harrington, Moore, and Hume, as justifiable and legal Publications, because they reasoned by comparison, though, in so doing, they shewed plans and systems of Government, not only different from, but preferable to, that of England; and he accuses me of endeavouring to confuse, instead of producing a system in the room of that which I had reasoned against; whereas the fact is, that I have not only reasoned by comparison of the Representative system against the Hereditary system, but I have gone further; for I have produced an instance of a Government established entirely on the Representative system, under which much greater happiness is enjoyed, much fewer Taxes required, and much higher credit is established, than under the system of Government in England. The funds in England have risen since the war only from 54l. to 97. and they have been down, since the Proclamation, to 87l. whereas the Funds in America rose in the mean time from 10l. to 120l. His charge against me "of destroying every principle of subordination," is equally as groundless, which even a single paragraph from the work will prove, and which I shall here quote:

"Formerly

“ Formerly, when divisions arose respecting
 “ Governments, recourse was had to the
 “ sword, and a civil war ensued. That savage custom is exploded by the new system,
 “ and *recourse is had to a National Convention*.
 “ Discussion, and the general will, arbitrates
 “ the question, and to this private opinion
 “ yields with a good grace, and *order is preserved uninterrupted.*”—Rights of Man,
 Part II. p. 173.

That two different charges should be brought at the same time, the one by a Member of the Legislative for *not* doing a certain thing, and the other by the Attorney General for *doing* it, is a strange jumble of contradictions. I have now justified myself, or the work rather, against the first, by stating the case in this letter, and the justification of the other will be undertaken in its proper place. But in any case the work will go on.

I shall now conclude this Letter with saying, that the only objection I found against the plan, and principles contained in the Second Part of *Rights of Man* when I had written the book, was, that they would beneficially interest at least ninety-nine persons out of every hundred throughout the nation, and therefore would not leave sufficient room for men to act from the direct and disinterested principle of honour ; but the prosecution now commenced has fortunately removed that objection, and
 the

the approvers and protectors of that work now
feel the immediate impulse of honour, added
to that National Interest.

I am, Mr. Dundas,

Not your obedient humble Servant,

But the contrary,

THOMAS PAINE.

APPEN-

APPENDIX.

TO

ON SLOW CRANLEY,

OR THE

CHAIRMAN.

WHO SHALL PRESIDE AT THE MEETING TO BE HELD AT

EPSOM, JUNE 18.

London, June 17th, 1792.

SIR,

I HAVE seen in the Public Newspapers the following Advertisement, to wit—

“ To the Nobility, Gentlemen, Clergy,
“ Freeholders, and other Inhabitants of the
“ County of Surrey.

“ At the requisition and desire of several
“ of the Freeholders of the County, I am,
“ in the absence of the Sheriff, to desire
“ the favour of your attendance, at a Meet-
“ ing to be held at Epsom, on Monday the
“ 18th Instant, at 12 o’Clock at noon, to
“ consider of an Humble Address to his
“ MAJESTY, to express our grateful appro-
“ bation of his MAJESTY paternal and well-
“ timed attention to the public welfare,
“ in his late most gracious Proclamation
“ against the enemies of our happy Con-
“ stitution,

(Signed)

“ ONSLOW CRANLEY.”

D

Taking

Taking it for granted, that the aforesaid Advertisement, equally as obscure as the Proclamation to which it refers, has nevertheless some meaning, and is intended to effect some purpose ; and as prosecution (whether wisely or unwisely, justly or unjustly) is already commenced against a work intitled RIGHTS OF MAN, of which I have the honour and happiness to be the author ; I feel it necessary to address this Letter to you, and to request that it may be read publicly to the Gentlemen who shall meet at Epsom in consequence of the Advertisement.

The work now under prosecution is, I conceive, the same work which is intended to be suppressed by the aforesaid Proclamation.—Admitting this to be the case, the Gentlemen of the County of Surrey are called upon by somebody to condemn a work, and they are at the same time forbidden by the Proclamation to know what that work is ; and they are further called upon to give their aid and assistance to prevent other people from knowing it also.—It is therefore necessary that the Author, for his own justification, as well as to prevent the Gentlemen who shall meet from being imposed upon by misrepresentation, should give some outlines of the principles and plans which that work contains.

The work, Sir, in question contains, first, an investigation of general principles of Government.

It

It also distinguishes Government into two classes or systems, the one the hereditary system—the other the representative system; and it compares these two systems with each other.

It shews, that what is called Hereditary Government cannot exist as a matter of right; because Hereditary Government always means a Government yet to come; and the case always is, that those who are to live afterwards have always the same right to establish a Government for themselves as the people who had lived before them.

It also shews the defect to which Hereditary Government is unavoidably subject: that it must, from the nature of it, throw Government into the hands of men totally unworthy of it from the want of principle, or unfitted for it from want of capacity. JAMES the II^d. and many others are recorded in the English history, as proofs of the former of those cases, and instances are to be found almost over Europe, to prove the truth of the latter.

It then shews that the representative system is the only true system of Government; that it is also the only system under which the liberties of any people can be permanently secure; and further, that it is the only one that can continue the same equal probability at all times of admitting of none but men properly qualified, both by principles and

abilities, into Government, and of excluding such as are otherwise.

The work shews also, by plans and calculations not hitherto denied nor controverted, not even by the prosecution that is commenced, that the taxes now existing may be reduced at least six millions, that taxes may be entirely taken off from the Poor, who are computed at one-third of the nation ; and that taxes on the other two thirds may be considerably reduced—that the aged Poor may be comfortably provided for, and the children of poor families properly educated—that fifteen thousand soldiers, and the same number of sailors, may be disbanded and allowed three shillings per week during life out of the surplus taxes ; and also that a proportionate allowance may be made to the officers, and the pay of the remaining soldiers and sailors be encreased ; and that it is better to apply the surplus taxes to those purposes than to consume them upon lazy and profligate placemen and pensioners ; and that the revenue, said to be twenty thousand pounds per annum, raised by a tax upon coals, and given to the Duke of RICHMOND, is a gross imposition upon all the people of London, ought to be instantly abolished.

This, Sir, is a concise abstract of the principles and plans contained in the work that is now prosecuted, and for the suppression of which the Proclamation appears to be intended

ed: but as it is impossible that I can in the compass of a letter, bring into view all the matters contained in the work, and as it is proper that the Gentlemen who may compose that Meeting should know what the merits or demerits of it are, before they come to any resolutions, either directly or indirectly relating thereto, I request the honour of presenting them with one hundred copies of the second part of the RIGHTS OF MAN, and also one thousand copies of my letter to Mr. DUNDAS, which I have directed to be sent to Epsom for that purpose; and I beg the favour of the Chairman to take the trouble of presenting them to the Gentlemen who shall meet on that occasion, with my sincere wishes for their happiness, and for that of the Nation in general.

Having now closed thus much of the subject of my letter, I next come to speak of what has relation to me personally. I am well aware of the delicacy that attends it, but the purpose of calling the Meeting appears to me so inconsistent with that justice that is always due between man and man, that it is proper I should (as well on account of the Gentlemen who may meet, as on my own account) explain myself fully and candidly thereon.

I have already informed the Gentlemen, that a prosecution is commenced against a work of which I have the honour and happiness to be the Author; and I have good reasons

reasons for believing that the Proclamation which the Gentlemen are called to consider, and to present an Address upon, is purposely calculated to give an impression to the Jury before whom that matter is to come. In short, that it is dictating a verdict by Proclamation; and I consider the instigators of the Meeting to be held at Epsom, as aiding and abetting the same improper, and in my opinion illegal purpose, and that in a manner very artfully contrived, as I shall now shew.

Had a Meeting been called of the Freeholders of the County of Middlesex, the Gentlemen who had composed that Meeting would have rendered themselves objectionable as persons to serve on a Jury before whom the judicial case was afterwards to come. But by calling a Meeting out of the County of Middlesex, that matter is artfully avoided, and the Gentlemen of Surrey are summoned, as if it were intended thereby to give a tone to the sort of verdict which the instigators of the Meeting no doubt wish should be brought in, and to give countenance to the Jury in so doing.

I am, SIR,

With much respect to the

Gentlemen who shall meet,

Their and your obedient humble Servant,

THOMAS PAINE.

TO

ONSLOW CRANLEY,

COMMONLY CALLED

LORD ONSLOW,

London, June, 21, 1792.

SIR,

WHEN I wrote you the Letter which Mr. HORNE TOOKE did me the favour to present to you, as Chairman of the Meeting held at Epsom, Monday, June 18th it was not with much expectation that you would do me the justice of permitting, or recommending it to be publickly read. I am well aware that the signature of THOMAS PAINE has something in it dreadful to sinecure Plecemen and Pensioners; and when you, on seeing the Letter opened, informed the Meeting that it was signed THOMAS PAINE, and added, in a note of exclamation, "the common enemy of us all," you spoke
one

one of the greatest truths you ever uttered, if you confine the expression to men of the same description with yourself; men living in indolence and luxury, on the spoil and labours of the Public.

The Letter has since appeared in the ARGUS, and probably in other papers. It will justify itself; but if any thing on that account hath been wanting, your own conduct at the Meeting would have supplied the omission. You there sufficiently proved that I was not mistaken in supposing that the Meeting was called to give an indirect aid to the prosecution commenced against a work, the reputation of which will long out-live the memory of the Pensioner I am writing to.

When Meetings, Sir, are called by the partizans of the Court, to preclude the Nation the right of investigating Systems and Principles of Government, and of exposing errors and defects, under the pretence of prosecuting any individual—it furnishes an additional motive for maintaining sacred that violated right.

The principles and arguments contained in the work in question, RIGHTS OF MAN, have stood, and they now stand, and I believe ever will stand, unrefuted. They are stated in a fair and open manner to the world, and they have already received the public approbation of a greater number of men,

men, of the best of characters, of every denomination of religion, and of every rank in life, (Placemen and Pensioners excepted) than all the Juries that shall meet in England, for ten years to come, will amount to and I have moreover good reasons for believing that the approvers of that work, as well private as public, are already more numerous than all the present Electors throughout the Nation.

Not less than forty pamphlets, intended as answers thereto, have appeared, and as suddenly disappeared : Scarcely are the titles of any of them remembered, notwithstanding their endeavours have been aided by all the daily abuse which the Court and Ministerial Newspapers, for almost a year and a half, could bestow, both upon the work and the author ; and now that every attempt to refute, and every abuse has failed, the invention of calling the work a Libel has been hit upon, and the discomfited party has pusillanimously retreated to prosecution and a Jury, and obscure Addresses.

As I well know that a long Letter from me will not be agreeable to you, I will relieve your uneasiness by making it as short as I conveniently can ; and will conclude it with taking up the subject at that part where Mr. HORNE TOOKE was interrupted from going on when at the Meeting

E

That

That Gentleman was stating, that the situation you stood in render it improper for you to appear *actively* in a scene in which your private interest was too visible: that you were a Bedchamber Lord at a thousand a year, and a Pensioner at three thousand pounds a year more—and here he was stopped by the little, but noisy circle you had collected round. Permit me then, Sir, to add an explanation to his words, for the benefit of your neighbours, and with which, and a few observations, I shall close my Letter.

When it was reported in the English Newspapers, some short time since, that the Empress of RUSSIA had given to one of her minions a large tract of country, and several thousands of peasants as property, it very justly provoked indignation and abhorrence in those who heard it. But if we compare the mode practised in England, with that which appears to us so abhorrent in Russia, it will be found to amount to very near the same thing;—for example—

As the whole of the revenue in England is drawn by taxes from the pockets of the people, those things called gifts and grants, (of which kind are all pensions and sinecure places) are paid out of that stock. The difference, therefore, between the two modes is, that in England the money is collected by the Government, and then given to the Pensioner, and in Russia he is left to collect
it

it for himself. The smallest sum which the poorest family in a county so near London as Surrey, can be supposed to pay annually of taxes, is not less than five pounds; and as your sinecure of one thousand, and pension of three thousand per annum, are made up of taxes paid by eight hundred such poor families, it comes to the same thing as if the eight hundred families had been given to you, as in Russia, and you had collected the money on your account. Were you to say that you are not quartered particularly on the people of Surrey, but on the nation at large, the objection would amount to nothing; for as there are more Pensioners than counties, every one may be considered as quartered on that in which he lives

What honour or happiness you can derive from being the PRINCIPAL PAUPER of the neighbourhood, and occasioning a greater expence than the poor, the aged, and the infirm, for ten miles round you, I leave you to enjoy. At the same time I can see that it is no wonder you should be strenuous in suppressing a book which strikes at the root of those abuses. No wonder that you should be against Reforms, against the Freedom of the Press, and the Right of Investigation. To you, and to others of your description, these are dreadful things; but you should also consider, that the motives

which prompt you to *act*. ought, by reflection. to compel you to be *silent*.

Having now returned your compliment, and sufficiently tired your patience, I take my leave of you, with mentioning, that if you had not prevented my former Letter from being read at the Meeting, you would not have had the trouble of reading this; and also with requesting, that the next time you call me “*a common enemy*,” you would add, “*of us sinecure Placemen and Pensioners*.”

I am, Sir,

&c. &c. &c.

THOMAS PAINE.

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1793.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS pamphlet was written by Mr. Paine, in the year 1787, on one of Mr. Pitt's armaments, namely, that against Holland. His object was to prevent the people of England from being seduced into a war, by stating clearly to them, the consequences which would inevitably befall the credit of this country should such a calamity take place.—The minister has at length, however, succeeded in his grand project, after three expensive armaments within the space of seven years ; and the event has proved how well founded were the predictions of Mr. Paine.—The person who has authority to bring forward this pamphlet in its present shape, thinks his doing so a duty which he owes both to Mr. P—— and the People of England, in order that the latter may judge what credit is due to (what a great judge calls) **THE WILD THEORIES OF MR. PAINE.**

London,
June 20th, 1793.

P R E F A C E.

AN expression in the British Parliament respecting the American war, alluding to Julius Cæsar having passed the Rubicon, has on several occasions introduced that river as the figurative river of war.

Fortunately for England she is yet on the peaceable side of the Rubicon; but as the flames once kindled are not always easily extinguished, the hopes of peace are not so clear as before the late mysterious dispute began.

But while the calm lasts, it may answer a very good purpose to take a view of the prospects consistent with the maxim, that he that goeth to war should first sit down and count the cost.

The nation has a young and ambitious Minister at its head, fond of himself, and deficient in experience; and instances have often shewn that judgment is a different thing to genius, and that the affairs of a nation are but unsafely trusted where the benefit of experience is wanting.

Illustrations have been drawn from the circumstances of the war before last to decorate the character of the present Minister, and, perhaps, they

they have been greatly over-drawn; for the management must have been bad to have done less than what was then done, when we impartially consider the means, the force, and the money employed.

It was then Great Britain and America against France singly, for Spain did not join till nearly the end of the war. The great number of troops which the American Colonies then raised and paid themselves, were sufficient to turn the scale, if all other parts had been equal. France had not at that time attended to naval affairs so much as she has done since; and the capture of French sailors before any declaration of war was made, which, however it may be justified upon policy, will always be ranked among the clandestine arts of war, assured a certain, but unfair advantage against her, because it was like a man administering a disabling dose over-night to the person whom he intends to challenge in the morning.

COMMON SENSE.

PROSPECT

P R O S P E C T S

W A R, &c.

RIGHT by chance and wrong by system, are things so frequently seen in the political world, that it becomes a proof of prudence neither to censure nor applaud too soon.

“The Rubicon is past,” was once given as a reason for prosecuting the most expensive war that England ever knew. Sore with the event, and groaning beneath a galling yoke of taxes, she has again been led ministerially on to the shore of the same
B delusive

delusive and fatal river, without being permitted to know the object or the reason why.

Expensive preparations have been gone into ; fears, alarms, dangers, apprehensions, have been mystically held forth as if the existence of the nation was at stake, and at last the mountain has brought forth a French mouse.

Whosoever will candidly review the present national characters of England and France, cannot but be struck with surprize at the change that is taking place. The people of France are beginning to think for themselves, and the people of England resigning up the privilege of thinking.

The affairs of Holland have been the bubble of the day ; and a tax is to be laid on shoes and boots (so say the news-papers) for the service of the Stadtholder of Holland. This will undoubtedly do honour to the nation by verifying the old English proverb, " Over shoes, over boots."

But tho' Democritus could scarcely have forbore laughing at the folly, yet as serious argument and sound reasoning are preferable

to ridicule, it will be best to quit the vein of unprofitable humour, and give the cause a fair investigation. But before we do this, it may not be improper to take a general review of sundry political matters that will naturally lead to a better understanding of the subject.

What has been the event of all the wars of England, but an amazing accumulation of debt, and an unparalleled burthen of taxes. Sometimes the pretence has been to support one outlandish cause, and sometimes another. At one time Austria, at another time Prussia, another to oppose Russia and so on; but the consequence has always been TAXES. A few men have enriched themselves by jobs and contracts, and the groaning multitude bore the burthen. What has England gained by war since the year 1738, only fifty years ago, to recompence her for TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS sterling, incurred as a debt within that time, and under the annual interest of which, besides what was incurred before, she is now groaning? Nothing at all.

The glare of fancied glory has often been held up, and the shadowy recompence im-

posed itself upon the senses. Wars that might have been prevented have been madly gone into, and the end has been debt and discontent. A sort of something which man cannot account for is mixed in his composition, and renders him the subject of deception by the very means he takes not to be deceived.

That jealousy which the individuals of every nation feels at the supposed designs of foreign powers, fits them to be the prey of Ministers, and of those among themselves whose trade is war, or whose livelihood is jobs and contracts. "Confusion to the politics of Europe, and may every nation be at war in six months," was a toast given in my hearing not long since.—The man was in court to the Ministry for a job.—Ye gentle Graces, if any such there be, who preside over human actions, how must ye weep at the viciousness of man.

When we consider, for the feelings of Nature cannot be dismissed, the calamities of war and the miseries it inflicts upon the human species, the thousands and tens of thousands of every age and sex who are rendered

dered wretched by the event, surely there is something in the heart of man that calls upon him to think ! Surely there is some tender cord, tuned by the hand of its Creator, that still struggles to emit in the hearing of the soul a note of sorrowing sympathy. Let it then be heard, and let man learn to feel, that the true greatness of a nation is founded on principles of humanity ; and that to avoid a war when her own existence is not endangered, and wherein the happiness of man must be wantonly sacrificed, is a higher principle of true honour than madly to engage in it.

But independent of all civil and moral considerations, there is no possible event that a war could produce to England on the present occasion, that could in the most distant proportion recompence the expence she must be at. War involves in its progress such a train of unforeseen and unsupposed circumstances, such a combination of foreign matters, that no human wisdom can calculate the end. It has but one thing certain, and that is increase of TAXES. The policy of European

ropean Courts is now so cast, and their interest so interwoven with each other, that however easy it may be to begin a war, the weight and influence of interfering nations compel even the conqueror to unprofitable conditions of peace.

Commerce and maritime strength are now becoming the fashion, or rather the rage of Europe, and this naturally excites in them a combind wish to prevent England encreasing its comparative strength by destroying, or even relatively weakening the other, and therefore, whatever views each may have at the commencement of a war, new enemies will arise as either gains the advantage, and continual obstacles ensue to embarrass success.

The greatness of Lewis the Fourteenth made Europe his enemy, and the same cause will produce the same consequence to any other European Power. That nation, therefore, only is truly wise, who contenting herself with the means of defence, creates to herself no unnecessary enemies by seeking to be greater than the system of Europe admits. The Monarch or the Minister who
exceeds

exceeds this line, knows but little of his business. It is what the poet on another occasion calls—

“ The point where sense and nonsense join. ”

Perhaps there is not a greater instance of the folly of calculating upon events, than are to be found in treaties of alliance. As soon as they have answered the immediate purpose of either of the parties, they are but little regarded. Pretences, afterwards, are never wanting to explain them away, nor reasons to render them abortive. And if half the money which nations lavish on speculative alliances were reserved for their own immediate purpose, whenever the occasion shall arrive, it would be more productively and advantageously employed.

Monarchs and Ministers, from ambition or resentment, often contemplate to themselves schemes of future greatness, and set out with what appears to them the fairest prospect: In the mean while, the great wheel of time and fate revolves unobserved, and something, never dreamed of, turns up and blasts the whole. A few fancied or unprofitable

profitable laurels supply the absence of success, and the exhausted nation is HUZZA'D INTO NEW TAXES.

The politics and interests of European Courts are so frequently varying with regard to each other, that there is no fixing even the probability of their future conduct. But the great principle of alliancing seems to be but little understood or little cultivated in Courts, perhaps the least of all in that of England.—No alliance can be operative, that does not embrace within itself, not only the attachment of the Sovereigns, but the real interest of the nations.

The alliance between France and Spain, however it may be spoken of as a mere family compact, derives its greatest strength from national interest. The mines of Peru and Mexico are the soul of this alliance. Were those mines extinct, the family compact would most probably dissolve.

There exists not a doubt in the mind of Spain, what part England would act, respecting those mines, could she demolish the maritime power of France; and therefore the interest of Spain feels itself continually
united

unite with France. Spain have high ideas of honour, but they have not the same ideas of English honour. They consider England as wholly governed by principles of interest, and that whatever she thinks it her interest to do, and supposes she has the power of doing, she makes very little ceremony of attempting. But this is not all—There is not a nation in Europe but what is more satisfied that those mines should be in the possession of Spain, than in that of any other European nation, because the wealth of those mines, sufficient to ruin Europe in the hands of some of its powers, is innocently employed with respect to Europe, and better and more peaceably distributed among them all, through the medium of Spain, than it would be through that, of any other nation. This is one of the secret causes that combine so large a part of Europe in the interest of France, because they cannot but consider her as standing as a barrier to secure to them the free and equal distribution of this wealth throughout all the dominions of Europe.

This alliance of interest is likewise one of the unseen cements that prevents Spain and Portugal, two nations not very friendly to each other, proceeding to hostilities. They are both in the same situation, and whatever their dislikes may be, they cannot fail to consider, that by giving way to resentment that would weaken and exhaust themselves, each would be exposed a prey to some stronger power.

In short, this alliance of national interest is the only one that can be trusted, and the only one that can be operative. All other alliances formed on the mere will and caprice of Sovereigns, of family connections, uncombined with national interests, are but the quagmire of politics, and never fail to become a loss to that nation who wastes its present substance on the expectancy of distant returns.

With regard to Holland, a man must know very little of the matter, not to know, that there exists a stronger principle of rivalry between Holland and England in point of commerce, than prevails between England and France in point of power :
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and, therefore, whenever a Stadtholder of Holland shall see it his interest to unite with the principle of his country, and act in concert with the sentiments of the very people who pay him for his services, the means now taken by England to render him formidable, will operate contrary to the political expectations of the present day.

Circumstances will produce their own natural effect, and no other, let the hopes or expectations of man be what they may. It is not our doing a thing with the design that it shall answer such or such an end, that will cause it to produce that end; the means taken must have a natural ability and tendency within themselves to produce no other, for it is this, and not our wishes or policy, that governs the event.

The English Navigation Act was levelled against the interest of the Dutch as a whole nation, and therefore it is not to be supposed that the catching at the accidental circumstances of one man, as in the case of the present Stadtholder, can combine the interest of that country with this. A few years, perhaps a less time, may remove him to the

place where all things are forgotten, and his successor, contemplating his fathers troubles, will be naturally led to reprobate the means that produced them and to repose himself on the interests of his country, in preference to the accidental and tumultuous assistance of exterior power.

England herself exhibits at this day, a species of this kind of policy. The present reign, by embracing the Scotch, has tranquilized and conciliated the spirit that disturbed the two former reign. Accusations were not wanting at that time to reprobate the policy as tinctured with ingratitude towards those who were the immediate means of the Hanover succession. The brilliant pen of Junius was drawn forth, but in vain. It enraptured without convincing; and tho' in the planitude of its rage it might be said to give elegance to bitterness, yet the policy survived the blast.

What then will be the natural consequence of this expence, on account of the Stadtholder, or on a war entered into from that cause? Search the various windings and caverns of the human heart, and draw from
thence

thence the most probable conclusion, for this is more to be depended upon than the projects or declarations of Ministers.

It may do very well for a paragraph in a miserable common news-paper, or the wild effusions of romantic politicians, or the mercenary views of those who wish for war on any occasion, or on no occasion at all, but for the sake of jobs and contracts, to talk of French finesse or French intrigue; but the Dutch are not a people to be impressed by the finesse or intrigue of France or England, or any other nation. If there has been any finesse in the case, it has been between the Electorate of Hanover, the King of Prussia, and the Stadtholder, in which it is most probable the people of England will be finessed out of a sum of money.

The Dutch, as is already observed, are not a people open to the impression of finesse. It is lost upon them. They are impressed by their commercial interest. It is the political soul of their country, the spring of their actions, and when this principle coincides with their ideas of freedom, it has all
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the impulse a Dutchman is capable of feeling.

The Opposition in Holland were the enemies of the Stadtholder, upon a conviction that he was not the friend of their national interests. They wanted no impulse but this. Whether this defect in him proceeded from foreign attachment, from bribery or corruption, or from the well-known defects of his understanding, is not to the point of enquiry. It was the effect rather than the cause that irritated the Hollanders.

If the Statholder made use of the power he held in the government to expose and endanger the interests and property of the very people who supported him, what other incentive does any man in any country require. If the Hollanders conceived the conduct of the Stadtholder injurious to their national interest, they had the same right to expel him which England had to expel the Stuarts; and the interference of England to re-establish him, serves only to confirm in the Hollanders the same hatred against England which the attempts of Lewis the XIVth, to re-establish the Stuarts caused in England against

against France ; therefore, if the present policy is intended to attach Holland to England, it goes on a principle exceedingly erroneous.

Let us now consider the situation of the Stadtholder, as making another part of the question.

He must place the cause of his troubles to some secret influence which governed his conduct during the late war, or in other words, that he was suspected of being the tool of the then British Administration. Therefore, as every part of an argument ought to have its weight, instead of charging the French of intriguing with the Hollanders, the charge more consistently lies against the British Ministry, for intriguing with the Stadtholder, and endangering the nation in a war without a sufficient object. That which the Ministry are now doing confirms the suspicion, and explains to the Hollanders that collusion of the Stadtholder against their national interests, which he must wish to have concealed, and the explanation does him more hurt than the unnecessary

cessary parade of service has done him good.

Nothing but necessity should have operated with England to appear openly in a case that must put the Stadtholder on still worse terms with his countrymen. Had France made any disposition for war, had she armed, had she made any one hostile preparation, there might then have been some pretence for England taking a step, that cannot fail to expose to the world that the suspicions of the Hollanders against the Stadtholders were well founded, and that their cause was just, however unsuccessful has been the event.

As to consequence of Holland in the scale of Europe (the great stake, say some of the news-papers, for which England is contending) that is naturally pointed out by her condition: As merchants for other nations her interest dictates to her to be a neutral power, and this she always will be, unless she is made war upon, as was the case in the last war ; and any expectation beyond what is the line of her interest, that is, beyond neutrally, either in England or France, will prove abortive.

tive. It therefore cannot be policy to go to war to effect that at a great expence, which will naturally happen of itself, and beyond which there is nothing to expect.

Let Holland be allied with England or with France, or with neither, or with both, her national conduct, consequently arising out of her circumstances, will be nearly the same, that is, she will be neutral. Alliances have such a natural tendency to sink into harmless unoperative things, that to make them a cause for going to war, either to prevent their being formed, or to break any already formed, is the silliest speculation that war can be made upon, or wealth wasted to accomplish. It would scarcely be worth the attempt, if war could be carried on without expence, because almost the whole that can be hoped at the risk and expence of a war, is effected by their natural tendency to inactivity.

However pompous the declarations of an alliance may be, the object of many of them is no other than good-will and reciprocally securing, as far as such security can go, that neither shall join the enemies of the other in any war that may happen. But the na-

tional circumstances of Holland operate to ensure this tranquillity on her part as effectually to the power she is not allied with, as the engagement itself does to the power with whom she is allied ; therefore the security from circumstances is as good as the security from engagement.

As to a cordial union of interest between Holland and England, it is as unnatural to happen as between two individual rivals in the same trade : And if there is any step that England could take to put it at a still greater distance, it is the part she is now acting. She has increased the animosity of Holland on the speculative politics of interesting the Stadtholder, whose future repose depends upon uniting with the opposition in Holland, as the present reign did with the Scotch. How foolish then has been the policy, how needless the expence, of endangering a war on account of the affairs of Holland.

A cordiality between England and France is less improbable than between England and Holland. It is not how an Englishman feels but how a Dutchman feels, that decides this

this question. Between England and France there is no real rivalry of interest; it is more the effect of temper, disposition, and the jealousy of confiding in each other, than any substantial cause, that keeps up the animosity. But on the part of Holland towards England, there is over and above the spirit of animosity, the more powerful motives of interested commercial rivalry, and the galling remembrance of past injuries. The making war upon them under Lord North's administration, when they were taking no part in the hostilities, but merely acting the business of merchants, is a circumstance that will not easily be forgotten by them. On these reasons, therefore, which are naturally deduced from the operative feelings of mankind, any expectation of attaching Holland to England as a friendly power, is vague and futile. Nature has her own way of working in the heart, and all plans of politics not founded thereon will disappoint themselves.

Any one who will review the history of English politics for several years past, must perceive that they have been directed with-

out system. To establish this, it is only necessary to examine one circumstance fresh in the mind of every man.

The American war was prosecuted at a very great expence, on the publicly declared opinion, that the retaining America was necessary to the existence of England; but America being now separated from England, the present politics are, that she is better without her than with her. Both these cannot be true, and their contradiction to each other shews a want of system. If the latter is true, it amounts to an impeachment of the political judgment of government, because the discovery ought to have been made before the expence was gone into. This single circumstance, yet fresh in every man's mind, is sufficient to create a suspicion, whether the present measures are more wisely founded than the former ones; and whether experience may not prove, that going to war for the sake of the Stadtholder, or for the hope of retaining a partial interest in Holland, who, under any connection can, from circumstances, be no more than a neutral

tral power, is not as weak policy as going to war to retain America.

If England is powerful enough to maintain her own ground and consequence in the world as an independent nation, she needs no foreign connection. If she is not, the fact contradicts the popular opinion that she is. Therefore, either her politics are wrong, or her true condition is not what she supposes it to be. Either she must give up her opinion to justify her politics, or renounce her politics to vindicate her opinion.

If some kind of connection with Holland is supposed to be an object worthy some expence to obtain, it may be asked why was that connection broken by making war upon her in the last war. If it was not then worth preserving without expence, is it now worth re-obtaining at a vast expence? If the Hollanders do not like the English, can they be made to like them against their wills? If it shall be said that under the former connection they were unfriendly, will they be more friendly under any other? They were then in as free a situation to chuse as any future circumstances can make them, and, therefore,

therefore, the national governing sentiment of the country can be easily discovered, for it signifies not what or who a Stadtholder may be, that which governs Holland is, and always must be, a commercial principle, and it will follow this line in spite of politics. Interest is as predominant and as silent in its operations as love ; it resists all the attempts of force, and countermines all the stratagem of controul.

The most able English Statesmen and Politicians have always held it as a principle, that foreign connections served only to embarrass and exhaust England. That, surrounded by the ocean, she could not be invaded as countries are on the Continent of Europe, and that her insular situation dictated to her a different system of politics to what those countries required, and that to be enleagued with them was sacrificing the advantages of situation to a capricious system of politics. That tho' she might serve them, they could not much serve her, and that as the service must at all times be paid for, it could always be procured when it was wanted ; and that it would be better to take it up in this line

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than to embarrass herself with speculative alliances that served rather to draw her into a Continental war on their account, than extricate her from a war undertaken on her own account.

From this discussion of the affairs of Holland, and of the inadequacy of Holland as an object for war, we will proceed to shew that neither England nor France are in a condition to go to war, and that there is no present object to the one or the other to recompence the expence that each must be at, or atone to the subjects of either for the additional burthens that must be brought upon them. I defend the cause of the poor, of the manufactures, of the tradesman, of the farmer, and of all those on whom the real burthen of taxes fall—but above all, I defend the cause of humanity.

It will always happen, that any rumour of war will be popular among a great number of people in London. There are thousands who live by it; it is their harvest; and the clamour which those people keep up in news-papers and conversations, passes unsuspiciously for the voice of the people,
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and it is not till after the mischief is done, that the deception is discovered.

Such people are continually holding up in very magnified terms the wealth of the nation, and the depressed condition of France, as reasons for commencing a war, without knowing any thing of either of these subjects.

But admitting them to be as true, as they are false, as will be hereafter shewn, it certainly indicates a vileness in the national disposition of any country, that will make the accidental internal difficulties to which all nations are subject, and sometimes encumbered with, a reason for making war upon them. The amazing encrease and magnitude of the paper currency now floating in all parts of England, exposes her to a shock as much more tremendous than the shock occasioned by the bankruptcy of the South Sea funds, as the quantity of credit and paper currency is now greater than they were at that time. Whenever such a circumstance shall happen, and the wisest men in the nation are, and cannot avoid being, impressed with the danger, it would be looked upon a baseness in France to make
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the distress and misfortune of England a cause and an opportunity for making war upon her, yet this hedious infidelity is publicly avowed in England. The bankruptcy of 1719, was precipitated by the great credit which the funds then had, and the confidence which people placed in them. Is not credit making infinitely greater strides now than it made then? Is not confidence equally as blind now as at that day? The people then supposed themselves as wise as they do now, yet they were miserably deceived; and the deception that has once happened will happen again from the same causes.

Credit is not money, and therefore it is not pay, neither can it be put in the place of money in the end. It is only the means of getting into debt, not the means of getting out, otherwise the national debt could not accumulate; and the delusion which nations are under respecting the extension of credit is exactly like that which every man respecting life the end is always nearer than was expected; and we become bank-

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rupts;

rupts in time by the same delusion that nations become bankrupts in property.

The little which nations know, or are some times willing to know, of each other, serves to precipitate them into wars which neither would have undertaken, had she fully known the extent of the power and circumstances of the other ; it may therefore be of some use to place the circumstances of England and France in a comparative point of view.

In order to do this the accidental circumstances of a nation must be thrown out of the account. By accidental circumstances is meant, those temporary disjointings and derangements of its internal system which every nation in the world is subject to, and which, like accidental fits of sickness in the human body, prevents in the interim the full exertions and exercise of its natural powers.

The substantial basis of the power of a nation arises out of its population, its wealth and its revenues. To these may be added the disposition of the people. Each of these will be spoken to as we proceed.

Instances

Instances are not wanting to shew that a nation confiding too much on its natural strength, is less inclined to be active in its operations than one of less natural powers who is obliged to supply that deficiency by encreasing its exertions. This has often been the case between England and France. The activity of England arising from its fears, has sometimes exceeded the exertions of France reposing on its confidence.

But as this depends on the accidental disposition of a people, it will not always be the same. It is a matter well known to every man who has lately been in France, that a very extraordinary change is working itself in the minds of the people of that nation. A spirit that will render France exceedingly formidable whenever its government shall embrace the fortunate opportunity of doubling its strength by allying, if it may be so expressed, (for it is difficult to express a new idea by old terms) the Majesty of the Sovereign with the Majesty of the nation; for of all alliances this is infinitely the strongest and the safest to be trusted to, because the interest so formed,

and operating against external enemies can never be divided.

It may be taken as a certain rule, that a subject of any country attached to the government on the principles above-mentioned is of twice the value he was before. Freedom in the subject is not a diminution, as was formerly believed, of the power of government, but an increase of it. Yet the progress by which changes of this kind are effected, requires to be nicely attended to.

Were governments to offer freedom to the people, or to shew an anxiety for that purpose, the offer most probably would be rejected. The purpose for which it was offered, might be mistrusted. Therefore the desire must originate with, and proceed from the mass of the people, and when the impression becomes universal, and not before, is the important moment for the most effectual consolidation of national strength and greatness that can take place.

While this change is working, there will appear a kind of chaos in the nation; but the creation we enjoy arose out of a chaos,
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and our greatest blessings appear to having confused beginning.

Therefore, we may take it for granted, that what has at this moment the appearance of disorder in France, is no more than one of the natural links in that great chain of circumstances by which nations acquire the summit of their greatness. The Provincial Assemblies already began in France, are as full, or rather a fuller representation of the people than the Parliaments of England are.

The French, or, as they were formerly called, the Franks, (from whence came the English word Frank and Free) were once the freest people in Europe; and as nations appear to have their periodical revolutions, it is very probable they will be so again. The change is already began. The people of France, as is before observed, are beginning to think for themselves, and the people of England resigning up the prerogative of thinking.

We shall now proceed to compare the present condition of England and France as to population, revenues and wealth, and to shew
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that neither is in a condition of going to war, and that war can end in nothing but loss, and, most probably, a temporary ruin to both nations.

To establish this point so necessary for both nations to be impressed with, a free investigation of all the matters connected with it is indispensable: If, therefore, any thing herein advanced shall be disagreeable, it must be justified on the ground that it is better to be known in order to prevent ruin, than to be concealed, when such concealment serves only to hasten the ruin on.

O F P O P U L A T I O N.

The Population of France being upwards of twenty-four millions, is more than double that of Great Britain and Ireland; besides which France recruits more soldiers in Swisserland than England does in Scotland and Ireland. To this may likewise be added, that England and Ireland are not on the best terms. The suspicion that England governs Ireland for the purpose of keeping her low to prevent her becoming a rival in trade and manufactures, will always operate

rate to hold Ireland in a state of sentimental hostilities with England.

R E V E N U E S.

The Revenues of France are twenty-four millions sterling. The Revenues of England fifteen millions and an half. The taxes per head in France are twenty shillings sterling ; the taxes per head in England are two pounds four shillings and two pence. The national debt in France including the life annuities (which are two-fifths of the whole debt, and are annually expiring) at eleven years purchase, is one hundred and forty-two millions sterling. The national debt of England, the whole of which is on perpetual interest is two hundred and forty-five millions. The national debt of France contains a power of annihilating itself without any new taxes for that purpose ; because it needs no more than to apply the life annuities as they expire to the purchase of the other three-fifths, which are on perpetual interest : But the national debt of England has not this advantage, and therefore the million a year that is to be applied

applied towards reducing it is so much additional tax upon the people, over and above the current service.

W E A L T H.

This is an important investigation, it ought therefore to be heard with patience, and judged of without prejudice.

Nothing is more common than for people to mistake one thing for another. Do not those who are crying up the wealth of the nation, mistake a paper currency for riches? To ascertain this point may be one of the means of preventing that ruin which cannot fail to follow by persisting in the mistake.

The highest estimation that is made of the quantity of gold and silver in Britain at this present day is twenty millions : and those who are most conversant with money transactions, believe it to be considerably below that sum. Yet this is no more money than what the nation possessed twenty years ago and therefore, whatever her trade may be, it has produced to her no profit. Certainly no man can be so unwise

as to suppose that encreasing the quantity of bank notes, which is done with as little trouble as printing of news-papers, is national wealth.

The quantity of money in the nation was very well ascertained in the years 1773, 74, and 76, by calling in the light gold coin.

There were upwards of fifteen millions and a half of gold coin then called in, which, with upwards of two millions of heavy guineas that remained out, and the silver coin, made above twenty millions; which is more than there is at this day. There is an amazing increase in the circulation of Bank paper, which is no more national wealth than newspapers are; because an increase of promissory notes, the capital remaining unincreased, or not increasing in the same proportion, is no increase of wealth. It serves to raise false ideas which the judicious soon discover, and the ignorant experience to their cost.

Out of twenty millions sterling, the present quantity of real money in the nation, it would be too great an allowance to say

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that one fourth of that sum, which is five millions, was in London. But even admitting this to be the case, it would require no very uncommon powers to ascertain pretty nearly what proportion of that sum of five millions could be in the bank. It would be ridiculous to suppose it could be less than half a million, and extravagant to suppose it could be two millions.

It likewise requires no very extraordinary discernment to ascertain how immense the quantity of Bank Notes, compared to its capital in the Bank must be, when it is considered, that the national taxes are paid in Bank Notes, that all great transactions are done in Bank Notes, and that were a loan for twenty millions to be opened at the meeting of Parliament, it would most probably be subscribed in a few days : Yet all men must know the loan could not be paid in money, because it is at least four times greater than all the money in London, including the Bankers and the Bank amount too. In short, every thing shews that the rage that overrun America, for paper money, or paper currency, has reached to England under another name.

name. There it was called Continental Money, and here it is called Bank Notes. But it signifies not what name it bears, if the capital is not equal to the redemption.

There is likewise another circumstance that cannot fail to strike with some force when it is mentioned, because every man that has any thing to do with money transactions, will feel the truth of it, tho' he may not before have reflected upon it. It is the embarrassed condition into which the gold coin is thrown by the necessity of weighing it, and by refusing guineas that are even standing weight, and there appears to be but few heavy ones. Whether this is intended to force the Paper Currency into circulation, is not here attempted to be asserted, but it certainly has that effect to a very great degree, because people, rather than submit to the trouble and hazard of weighing, will take paper in preference to money. This was once the case in America.

The natural effect of encreasing and continuing to increase paper currencies is that of banishing the real money. The shadow

takes place of the substance till the country is left with only shadows in its hands.

A trade that does not increase the quantity of real money in a country, cannot be stiled a profitable trade; yet this is certainly the case with England: and as to credit, of which so much has been said, it may be founded on ignorance or a false belief, as well as on real ability.

In Amsterdam the money deposited in the Bank is never taken out again. The depositors, when they have debts to pay, transfer their right to the persons to whom they are indebted, and those again proceed by the same practice, and the transfer of the right goes for payment; now could all the money deposited in the Bank of Amsterdam be privately removed away, and the matter be kept a secret, the ignorance, or the belief that the money was still there, would give the same credit as if it had not been removed. In short, credit is often no more than an opinion, and the difference between credit and money is that money requires no opinion to support it.

All

All the countries in Europe annually increase in their quantity of gold and silver except England. By the registers kept at Lisbon and Cadiz, the two ports into which the gold and silver from South America are imported, it appears that above eighty millions sterling have been imported within twenty years *. This has spread itself over Europe, and increased the quantity in all the countries on the Continent, yet twenty years ago there was as much gold and silver in England as there is at this time.

The value of the silver imported into Europe exceeds that of the gold, yet every one can see there is no increase of silver coin in England; very little silver coin appearing except what are called Birmingham shillings, which have a faint impression of King William on one side, and are smooth on the other.

In what is the profits of trade to shew itself but by increasing the quantity of that

* From 1763 to 1777, a period of fifteen years of peace, the registered importations of gold and silver into Lisbon and Cadiz, was seventy millions sterling, besides what was privately landed,

which

which is the object of trade, money. An increase of paper is not an increase of national profit any more than it is an increase of national money, and the confounding paper and money together, or not attending to the distinction, is a rock that the nation will one day split upon.

Whether the payment of interest to foreigners, or the trade to the East-Indies, or the nation embroiling itself in foreign wars, or whether the amount of all the trade which England carries on with different parts of the world, collectively taken, balances itself without profit; whether one or all of these is the cause, why the quantity of money does not encrease in England is not, in this place, the object of enquiry. It is the fact and not the cause that is the matter here treated of.

Men immerfed in trade and the concerns of a counting-house, are not the most speculative in national affairs, or always the best judges of them. Accustomed to run risks in trade, they are habitually prepared to run risks with Government, and though they
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are the first to suffer, they are often the last to foresee an evil.

Let us now cast a look towards the manufactures. A great deal has been said of their flourishing condition, and perhaps a great deal too much, for it may again be asked, where is the profit if there is no increase of money in the nation.

The woollen manufacture is the staple manufacture of England, and this is evidently on the decline, in some, if not in all, its branches. The city of Norwich, one of the most populous cities in England, and wholly dependent on the woollen manufacture, is, at this day in a very impoverished condition, owing to the decline of its trade.

But not to rest the matter on a general assertion, or embarrass it with numerous statements, we will produce a circumstance by which the whole progress of the trade may be ascertained.

So long as thirty years ago the price paid to the spinners of wool was one shilling for twenty-four skains, each skain containing five hundred and sixty yards. This, according to the term of the trade, was called giving a
shilling

shilling for a shilling. A good hand would spin twelve skains, which was sixpence a day.

According to the increase of taxes, and the increased price of all the articles of life, they certainly ought now to get at least fifteen pence, for what thirty years ago they got a shilling for. But such is the decline of the trade, that the case is directly the contrary. They now get but ninepence for the shilling, that is, they get but ninepence for what thirty years ago they got a shilling for. Can these people cry out for war, when they are already half ruined by the decline of trade, and half devoured by the increase of taxes.

But this is not the whole of the misfortunes which that part of the country suffers, and which will extend to others. The Norfolk farmers were the first who went into the practice of manuring their land with marle : but time has shewn, that though it gave a vigour to the land for some years, it operated in the end to exhaust its stamina ; that the lands in many parts are worse than before they began to marle, and that it will not answer to marle a second time.

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The manufacturers of Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield have had of late a considerable spring, but this appears to be rather on speculation than certainty. The speculations on the American market have failed, and that on Russia is becoming very precarious. Experience likewise was wanting to ascertain the quantity which the treaty of commerce with France would give sale to, and it is most probable the estimations have been too high, more especially as English goods will now become unpopular in France, which was not the case before the present injudicious rupture.

But in the best state which manufactures can be in, they are very unstable sources of national wealth. The reasons are, that they seldom continue long in one stay. The market for them depends upon the caprice of fashions, and sometimes of politics in foreign countries, and they are at all times exposed to rivalry as well as to change. The Americans have already several manufactures among them, which they prefer to the English, such as axes, scythes, sickles, houghs, planes, nails, &c. Window glass,

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which

which was once a considerable article of export from England to America, the Americans now procure from other countries, nearly as good as the English Crown Glafs, and but little dearer than the common green window glafs.

It is fomewhat remarkable that fo many pens have been difplayed to fhew, what is called the increafe of the commerce of England, and yet all of them have flopt fhort of the grand point, that is, they have gone no farther than to fhew that a larger number of fhipping, and a greater quantity of tonnage have been employed of late years than formerly: But this is no more than what is happening in other parts of Europe. The prefent fafhion of the world is commerce, and the quantity encreafes in France as well as in England.

But the object of all trade is profit, and profit fhews itfelf, not by an increafe of paper currency, for that may be nationally had without the trouble of trade, but by an increafe of real money: therefore the eftimation fhould have ended, not in the comparative quantity of fhipping and tonnage, but in
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the comparative quantity of gold and silver.

Had the quantity of gold and silver increased in England, the ministerial writers would not have stopt short at shipping and tonnage; but if they know any thing of the matter, they must know that it does not increase, and that the deception is occasioned by the increase of paper instead of money, and that as paper continue to increase, gold and silver will diminish. Poorer in wealth and richer in delusion.

Something is radically wrong, and time will discover it to be putting paper in the room of money.

Out of one hundred millions sterling of gold and silver, which must have been imported into Europe from South America since the commencement of the peace before last, it does not appear that England has derived or retains any portion of it.

Mr. Neckar states the annual increase of gold and silver in France, that is, the proportion which France draws of the annual importation into Europe, to be upwards of one million sterling: But England, in the space of twenty

years, does not appear to have encreased in any thing but paper currency.

Credulity is wealth while credulity lasts, and credit is, in a thousand instances, the child of credulity. It requires no more faith to believe paper to be money, than to believe a man could go into a quart bottle; and the nation whose credulity can be imposed upon by bottle conjuring, can, for a time, be imposed upon by paper conjuring.

From these matters we pass on to make some observations on the national debt, which is another species of paper currency.

In short to whatever point the eye is directed, whether to the money, the paper, the manufactures, the taxes, or the debt, the inability of supporting a war is evident, unless it is intended to carry it on by fleecing the skin over peoples ears by taxes; and therefore the endangering the nation in a war for the sake of the Stadtholder of Holland, or the King of Prussia, or any other foreign affairs, from which England can derive no possible advantage, is an absurd and ruinous system of politics.

France

France perhaps is not in a better situation, and, therefore, a war where both must lose, and wherein they could only act the part of seconds, must historically have been denominated a boyish, foolish, unnecessary quarrel.

But before we enter on the subject of the national debt, it will be proper to take a general review of the different manner of carrying on war since the revolution to what was the practice before.

Before the Revolution the intervals of peace and war always found means to pay off the expence, and leave the nation clear of incumbrances at the commencement of any succeeding war; and even for some years after the Revolution this practice was continued.

From the year 1688, (the æra of the Revolution) to the year 1702, a period of fourteen years, the sums borrowed by Government at different times, amounted to forty-four millions; yet this sum was paid off almost as fast as it was borrowed; thirty-four millions being paid off, at the commencement of the year 1702. This was a greater exer-

tion than the nation has ever made since, for exertion is not in borrowing but in paying.

From that time wars have been carried on by borrowing and funding the capital on a perpetual interest, instead of paying it off, and thereby continually carrying forward and accumulating the weight and expence of every war into the next. By this means that which was light at first, becomes immensely heavy at last. The nation has now on its shoulders the weight of all the wars from the time of Queen Anne. This practice is exactly like that of loading a horse with a feather at a time till you break his back.

The national debt exhibits at this day a striking novelty. It has travelled on in a circular progression till the amount of the annual interest has exactly overtaken, or become equal to, the first capital of the national debt, NINE MILLIONS. Here begins the evidence of the predictions so long foretold by the ablest calculators in the nation. The interest will, in succession overtake all the succeeding capitals, and that with the proportioned rapidity with which those capitals

pitals accumulated ; because by continuing the practice, not only higher and higher premiums must be given for loans, but the money, or rather the paper, will not go so far as it formerly did, and therefore the debt will encrease with a continually encreasing velocity.

The expence of every war, since the national debt began, has, upon an average, been double the expence of the war preceding it : the expence therefore of the next war will be at least two hundred millions, which will encrease the annual interest to at least seventeen millions, and consequently the taxes in the same proportion ; the following war will encrease the interest to thirty-three millions, and a third war will mount up the interest to sixty-five millions. This is not going on in the spirit of prediction, but taking what has already been as a rule for what will yet be, and therefore the nation has but a miserable prospect to look at. The weight of accumulating interest is not much felt till after many years have passed over ; but when it begins to be heavy, as it does now, the burthen encreases like that of purchasing a horse
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with a farthing for the first nail of the shoe and doubling it.

As to Mr. Pitt's scheme of reducing the national debt by a million a year, applied to the purchase of stock, it will turn out, to say no worse of it, a ridiculous and frivolous project : For if a minister has not experience enough to distinguish a feather in the air, and such there always will be, from the God of War, nor the clamours and interest of those who are seeking for jobs and contracts, from the voice and interest of the people, he will soon precipitate the nation into some unnecessary war : and therefore, any scheme of redemption of the debt, founded on the supposed continuance of peace, will, with such conduct, be no more than a balloon.

That the funding system contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction, is as certain as that of the human body containing within itself the seeds of death. The event is as fixed as fate, unless it cannot be taken as a proof that because we are not dead we are not to die.

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The consequence of the funding scheme, even if no other event takes place, will be to create two violent parties in the nation. The one goaded by taxes continually encreasing to pay the interest, the other reaping a benefit from the taxes by receiving the interest. This is very strongly shadowed forth, like the hand-writing on the wall, by the ingenious author of the Commercial Atlas, in his observations on the national debt.

The slumber that for several years has over-shadowed the nation in all matters of public finance, cannot be supposed to last for ever. The people have not yet awakened to the subject, and this is taken for granted they never will. But, if a supposed unnecessary expenditure of between five and six millions sterling in the finances of France, (for the writer undertakes not to judge of the fact) has awakened that whole nation, a people supposed to be perfectly docile in all national matters, surely the people of England will not be less attentive to their rights and properties. If this should not be the case, the inference will be fairly drawn, that England is losing the spirit that France is

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taking

taking up, and that it is an ingenious device in the Ministry to compose the nation to unpopular and unnecessary taxes, by shamming a victory when there was no enemy at hand.

In short, every war serves to encrease every kind of paper currency in the nation, and to diminish the quantity of gold and silver, by sending it to Prussia and other foreign countries.

It will not be denied, that credulity is a strong trait in the English character; and this has in no instance shewn itself more than in mistaking paper for money, except it be in the unaccountable ignorance of mistaking the debt of the nation for riches. But the suspicion is beginning to awake.

We will close this article with observing, that a new kind of paper currency has arose within a few years, which is that of country Bank Notes; almost every town now has its Bank, its Paper Mint, and the coinage of paper is become universal. In the mean time the melting down the light guineas, and recoinage them, passes with those who know no better for an encrease of money; because every new guinea they see, and
which

which is but seldom, they naturally suppose to be a guinea more, when it is really nothing else than an old guinea new cast.

From this account of the money, paper, and national debt of England, we proceed to compare it with the money, paper, and national debt of France.

It is very well known that paper has not the credit in France which it has in England, and that, consequently, there is much less of it. This has naturally operated to encrease the quantity of gold and silver in France, and prevent the encrease of paper.

The highest estimation of the quantity of gold and silver in England, as already stated, is twenty millions sterling, and the quantity of paper grafted thereon immense.

The quantity of gold and silver in France, is upwards of ninety millions sterling, and the quantity of paper grafted thereon, trifling. France, therefore, has a long run of credit yet in reserve, which England has already expended; and it will naturally follow, that when the Government of France and the nation shall adjust their differences by an amicable embrace of each other, that this

reserved credit will be brought forth, and the power of France will be at least doubly encreased. The adjustment of these differences is but the business of a day, whenever its Government shall see the proper moment for doing it ; and nothing would precipitate this event more than a war. The cry of war, from the injudicious provocations given by the British Ministry, and the disadvantageous effect of the Commercial Treaty, is becoming popular in France.

The near situation of France to Spain and Portugal, the two countries which import gold and silver, and her manufactures being better adapted to the warm climate of those countries than the manufactures of England, give her superior opportunities of drawing money into the nation ; and as she has but little trade to the East Indies, the money so drawn in is not drawn out again, as in England. Another advantage is, that from the greatness of her dominions, she has no occasion to waste her wealth in hiring foreign troops, as is the practice with England ; and a third advantage is, that the money which England squanders in Prussia
and

and other countries on the Continent serves to encrease the wealth of France, because a considerable part of it centers there through the medium of her commerce.

Admitting Great Britain and Ireland to contain ten millions of inhabitants, the quantity of money per head is forty shillings; the money per head in France is three pounds fifteen shillings, which is nearly double.

The national debt of England, compared to the whole amount of money in the nation, is as twelve is to one, that is, the debt is twelve times greater than all the money amounts to.

The national debt of France, compared to the whole amount of her money, is considerably less than as two is to one, that is, her debt is not so much as twice the amount of her money. France, therefore, as already stated, has an immense credit in reserve whenever the settlement of her present internal differences shall furnish her with the means of employing it; and that period, so much to be dreaded by England, is hastening on.

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The annual interest of the national debt of England and France are nearly equal, being NINE MILLIONS sterling ; but with this difference, that above three millions and a half of the annual interest of France are only life annuities. The interest, therefore, of her debt lessens every year, and she will have a surplus up to the amount of three millions and a half, to apply to the purchase of that part of the debt which is on perpetual interest ; therefore, without any new taxes for that purpose, she can discharge her whole debt in less than a third of the time on which it can be done in England, according to Mr. Pitt's plan, with his additional tax of a million a year.

But let the event of Mr. Pitt's plan be what it may, as to reducing the debt, there is one circumstance that cannot fail to accompany it, which is, that of making it the interest of Government, in executing this plan, to undermine the interest of its creditors, or the value of the funds, for the purpose of purchasing at a cheaper rate.

The plan is founded on the presumption of a long uninterrupted peace, and that future

ture loans would not be wanted, which can not now be expected, for France in her turn is getting into a temper for war. The plan naturally strikes at the credit of Government, in contracting further debts; for were a loan to be opened to-morrow, the subscribers, naturally perceiving that it was the interest of Government to undermine them as soon as they became creditors, would consequently seek to secure themselves, by demanding higher premiums at first. It is a question, whether a premium of thirty *per cent.* is now as good as ten was before; and therefore the plan, in case of a war, instead of lessening the debt, serves to push it more rapidly on.

The Minister certainly never understood the natural operation of his plan, or he would not have acted as he has done. The plan has two edges, while he has supposed it to have only one. It strikes at the debt in peace, and at the credit in war.

The gentleman who originally furnished the Minister with this plan, now gives it totally up. He knew its operation both in peace and war, but the Minister appears not

to

to have comprehended it: But if he has made a mistake, his youth and inexperience must be his apology.

The plan, unless it should be altered, that is given out for providing for the expence of the late armaments, is in reality no other than the American plan of paper money, and it is very probable that the Minister has received it from some American refugee.

The plan given out is, that the Minister is to borrow the MONEY of the Bank. Here is the delusion, The name of MONEY covers the deception. For the case is, that the Bank do not lend the real money, but it issues out an emission of Bank-paper, and the presumption is, that there will be no run upon the Bank in consequence of such an extraordinary emission; but if there should, no man can be at a loss in foreseeing the issue.

There are those who remember, that on a former run the Bank was obliged to prolong the time by paying shillings and sixpences, and it is universally credited, that a quantity of silver is now preserved in the Bank for the same purpose; but the device, to every person of reflection, shews that the capital
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is not equal to the demands, and that the Chapter of Accidents is part of the Bible of Bank.

It may be asked why do not the Government issue the paper instead of the Bank? The answer is, that it is exactly the same thing in the end, only with this difference in the mode, that were the Government to do it, it would be too visible a system of paper currency, and that a disguise is necessary.

Having recourse to the Bank, is a kind of playing the Bank off against the Funds. Fighting one kind of paper against another, and in the combat both will be sufferers.

In short, the delusion of paper riches is working as rapidly in England as it did in America. A young and inexperienced Minister, like a young and inexperienced Congress, may suppose that he sees mines of wealth in a printing-press, and that a nation cannot be exhausted while there is paper and ink enough to print paper money. Every new emission, until the delusion bursts, will appear to the nation an increase of wealth.

Every merchant's coffers will appear a treasury, and he will swell with paper riches till he becomes a bankrupt.

When a Bank makes too free with its paper, it exposes itself in much the same manner which a Government does that makes too free with its power; too much credit is as bad as too little; and there is such a thing as governing too much as well in a Bank as in a Government. But nothing exposes a Bank more than being under the influence, instead of the protection of Government, and whenever either the property or the credit of a Bank can be commanded or influenced by a Government or a Minister, its destruction is not far off.

We have now stated the comparative condition of England and France as to money matters. But there yet remain some things necessary to be touched upon.

It is an error very frequently committed in the world to mistake disposition for condition.

France, with a much better permanent condition for war than England, is in a less disposition to enter into one, and this want of disposition

disposition in her is mistaken in England for want of condition ; and on the other hand, the apparent disposition in England for war is mistaken by her for a condition to undertake and carry one on.

There appears a uniformity in all the works of Nature, from individual animals up to nations. The smaller animals are always the most fretful, passionate, and insulting. They mistake temper for strength, and often fall a sacrifice to vexations impetuosity, while larger ones go calmly on, and require repeated provocations to incense them. France may yet be aggravated into war, and very probably will. Where the condition exists, the disposition may at any time take place. We may create temper, but we cannot create strength.

While the literature of England preserves an honourable rank among the nations of Europe, her national character is most miserably suffering in the world through her new-papers. The most barefaced perfidiousness, the most abandoned principles are daily propagated. A total disregard to all the obligations of national faith

and honour are publicly professed. Instead of that true greatness of heart, that calm grandeur of sentiment, that generous disdain of vulgar littleness that ought always to accompany the disputes of nations, scarcely any thing is to be seen but mean abuse and low scurrility. This is not the case in any other country in the world but England.

We will now proceed to conclude with a few additional observations on the state of politics.

For several weeks the nation was amused with the daily rumours of some great Cabinet secret, and admiring how profoundly the secret was kept, when the only secret was, that there was no secret to divulge.

But this opinion of a secret very well shews that the opinion of the nation was different to the opinion of the Minister, or the supposition of some great secret would not have taken place, as the affairs of the Stadtholder were then publicly known. It shews that the nation did not think the Stadtholder of Holland a sufficient reason for laying new taxes on England, and running into the risk
and

and expence of a war, and great was the surprise when the declaration and counter declaration, like twin mice, peeped from the Cabinet.

But there is one secret that requires to be investigated, which is, whether the Minister did not know that France would not engage in a war, and whether the preparations were not an idle parade, founded on that knowledge.

Whether it was not meanly putting England under the banners of Prussia, and taking thereby a dishonourable advantage of the internal perplexity which France was then in, and which in its turn may happen to England, to assume the air of a challenge, which it must be known would not be accepted, because there was nothing to make the acceptance necessary.

Whether this conduct in the Minister does not mischievously operate to destroy the harmony that appeared to be growing up between the two nations; to lessen, if not totally destroy, the advantages of the Commercial Treaty, and to lay the seeds of future

ture wars, when there was a prospect of a long and uninterrupted peace.

When there are two ways of accomplishing the same object, it almost always happens that the one is better than the other; and whether the Minister has not chosen the worst, a few observations will elucidate this point.

It signifies not what airy schemes, projects, or even treaties may be formed, especially if done under the point of the bayonet, for all that can be expected from Holland is neutrality. Her trade is with all nations, and it is from her neutrality that this trade has arisen. Destroy this neutrality and Holland is destroyed. Therefore it matters not what party sentiments men may be of in Holland as to the Stadtholdership, because there is still a superior banner under which all will unite.

Holland will not expose her trade to the devastations of England, by joining France in a war, neither will she expose it to France by joining England. It may very well be asked, what are England or France to Holland, that she should join with either in a war,

war, unless she is compelled to it by one or the other making war upon her, as was the case in the last war.

Events may soon happen in Europe to make all the force that Prussia can raise necessary to her own defence, and Holland must be wise enough to see, that by joining England she not only exposes her trade to France, but likewise her dominions, because France can invade her in a quarter in which England cannot defend her, provided her Generals prove true, for Holland lies open to France by land. It is, therefore, more immediately the interest of Holland to keep on good terms with France; neither can England give her any equivalent to balance this circumstance. How foolish then are the politics which are directed to unnatural and impossible objects. Surely the experience of a century past is sufficient to shew to any man, except one of yesterday, what the conduct of Holland in all cases must be.

But there is another circumstance that do not fail to impress foreigners, and especially Holland; which is, that the immensity of the national debt of England, the prospect of its
still

still encreasing, and the exorbitancy of her paper currencies, render her too insecure in herself to be much confided in by foreign nations for any length of time. Because that which must happen may soon happen.

Concerning the rescript delivered by the French Minister, there is one certain explanation to be put upon it, which is, that if France had been disposed for war, she would not have made that communication. The very making it goes to a full explanation of the parts; and as soon as Mr. Pitt obtained this knowledge, it appeared to him a safe moment to gird on his sword; and when he found that France was as well weaponed as himself, to propose to take it off again. This is in a few words the whole history of the campaign. A war Minister in peace, and a peace Minister in war. Brave where there is no danger, and prudent when there is.

The rescript could be nothing else than an explanation, on the part of France, of the situation she conceived herself to be subject to, and the probable consequences that might follow from it. This she was not obliged to make, and therefore her making it was a
 matter

matter of civil communication towards a power she was at peace with, and which in return entitled her to a similar communication on the part of the British Cabinet. All this might have been done without either the expence, the tumult, the provocations, or the ill blood that has been created.

The alliance between France and the Dutch, was formed while the Stadtholder was a part of the Government, therefore France could not, from that alliance, take a part either for or against him. She could only act when the whole interest of the Republic was exposed to a foreign enemy, and it was not certain that this might not be the case.

The rescript, therefore, instead of being taken as a ground for war, was in itself a ground for peace, because it tended to bring on a discussion of all the circumstances of France and England relative to Holland, which could not have failed to place Holland in a state of neutrality, and that only will be the final event now; because, independent of all parties, no other is consistent

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with the whole national interest of that Republic.

But this not being done, it is now left to the Dutch to do it for themselves.

An alliance with England, at the same time there is one existing with France, will secure this neutrality, so necessary to the Dutch Republic. By this stroke of politics she will be free from all obligations to join with either in a war, and be guaranteed by both. Her alliance with England will debar England from molesting her trade by sea, and that with France will debar France from the same thing, and likewise from invading her by land in all future cases. There are so many probable circumstances to arise on the Continent of Europe, that the situation of Holland requires this safeguard, more especially from France, on account of her land connection.

The rising greatness of the Russian Empire, the probable union of the interest of this Empire with that of Germany and France, and consequently with Spain, whose interests cannot be separated, and the probability of
a rupture

a rupture between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, are matters that cannot fail to impress the Dutch with the necessity of securing themselves by land as well as by sea, and to prevent their being drawn into the quarrels either of England or France.

Upon the whole, as there was a civil as well as uncivil line of politics to be pursued, every man of humane and generous sentiments must lament it was not chosen.

A disposition for peace was growing up in every part of France, and there appeared at the same time a mutual one rising in England. A silent wish on both sides was universally expanding itself, that wars, so fatal to the true interest, and burthenfome by taxes to the subjects, of both countries, might exist no more, and that a long and lasting peace might take place.

But, instead of cultivating this happy opportunity, the pettish vanity of a young and unexperienced Minister, who balanced himself between peace and war to take his choice of circumstances, instead of principles ; and who went into an expensive armament when there was none to contend with, and not till
after

after the affairs of Holland might be said to be terminated, has destroyed those seeds of harmony that might have been rendered of more value to both nations than their fleets and armies.

He has permitted the nation to run mad under the universal influence of a groundless belief of vast hostile armaments in the East and West Indies, and the supposition of a secret that never existed. By this means the sparks of ill will are afresh kindled up between the nations, the fair prospect of lasting peace is vanished, and a train of future evils fills up the scene ; and that at a time when the internal affairs of France, however confused they at present appear, are naturally approaching to a great and harmonious encrease of its power.

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THE

DECLINE

AND

FALL

OF THE

English System of Finance.

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THE

DECLINE, &c.

NOTHING, they say, is more certain than death, and nothing more uncertain than the time of dying; yet we can always fix a period beyond which man cannot live, and within some moment of which he will die. We are enabled to do this, not by any spirit of prophecy, or foresight into the event, but by observation of what has happened in all cases of human or animal existence. If then any other subject, such, for instance, as a system of finance, exhibits in its progress a series of symptoms indicating decay, its final dissolution is certain, and the period of it can be calculated from the symptoms it exhibits.

Those who have hitherto written on the English system of finance (the funding system) have been

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uniformly

uniformly impressed with the idea of its downfall happening *some time or other*. They took, however, no data for that opinion, but expressed it predictively, or merely as opinion, from a conviction that the perpetual duration of such a system was a natural impossibility. It is in this manner that Dr. Price has spoken of it; and Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*, has spoken in the same manner; that is, merely as opinion without data. "The progress," says Smith, "of the enormous debts, which at present oppress, and will in the long-run most probably ruin, all the great nations of Europe, (he should have said *governments*) has been pretty uniform." But this general manner of speaking, though it might make some impression, carried with it no conviction.

It is not my intention to predict any thing; but I will shew from data already known, from symptoms and facts which the English funding system has already exhibited publicly, that it will not continue to the end of Mr. Pitt's life, supposing him to live the usual age of a man. How much sooner it may fall, I leave to others to predict.

Let financiers diversify systems of credit as they will, it is nevertheless true, that every system of credit is a system of paper money. Two experiments have already been had upon paper money; the one in America, the other in France. In both
those

those cases the whole capital was emitted, and that whole capital, which in America was called continental money, and in France assignats, appeared in circulation; the consequence of which was, that the quantity became so enormous, and so disproportioned to the quantity of population, and to the quantity of objects upon which it could be employed, that the market, if I may so express it, was glutted with it, and the value of it fell. Between five and six years determined the fate of those experiments. The same fate would have happened to gold and silver, could gold and silver have been issued in the same abundant manner as paper had been, and confined within the country as paper money always is, by having no circulation out of it; or to speak on a larger scale, the same thing would happen in the world, could the world be glutted with gold and silver, as America and France has been with paper.

The English system differs from that of America and France in this one particular, that its capital is kept out of sight; that is, it does not appear in circulation. Were the whole capital of the national debt, which at the time I write this is almost four hundred million pounds sterling, to be emitted in assignats or bills, and that whole quantity put into circulation, as was done in America and in France, those English assignats, or bills, would sink in value

as those of America and France have done; and that in a greater degree, because the quantity of them would be more disproportioned to the quantity of population in England, than was the case in either of the other two countries. A nominal pound sterling in such bills would not be worth one penny.

But though the English system, by thus keeping the capital out of sight, is preserved from hasty destruction, as in the case of America and France, it nevertheless approaches the same fate, and will arrive at it with the same certainty, though by a slower progress. The difference is altogether in the degree of speed by which the two systems approach their fate, which, to speak in round numbers, is as twenty is to one; that is, the English system, that of funding the capital instead of issuing it, contained within itself a capacity of enduring twenty times longer than the systems adopted by America and France; and at the end of that time it would arrive at the same common grave, the Potter's field, of paper money.

The datum, I take for this proportion of twenty to one, is the difference between a capital and the interest at five per cent. Twenty times the interest is equal to the capital. The accumulation of paper money in England is in proportion to the accumulation of the interest upon every new loan;
and

and therefore the progress to dissolution is twenty times slower than if the capital were to be emitted and put into circulation immediately. Every twenty years in the English system is equal to one year in the French and American systems.

Having thus stated the duration of the two systems, that of funding upon interest, and that of emitting the whole capital without funding, to be as twenty to one, I come to examine the symptoms of decay, approaching to dissolution, that the English system has already exhibited, and to compare them with similar symptoms in the French and American systems.

The English funding system began one hundred years ago; in which time there has been six wars, including the war that ended in 1697.

1. The war that ended, as I have just said, in 1697.
2. The war that began in 1702.
3. The war that began in 1739.
4. The war that began in 1756.
5. The American war, that began in 1775.
6. The present war, that began in 1793.

The national debt, at the conclusion of the war, which ended in 1697, was twenty-one millions and an half. (See Smith's Wealth of Nations, chapter on Public Debts). We now see it approaching fast to four hundred millions. If be-

tween those two extremes of twenty-one millions and four hundred millions, embracing the several expences of all the including wars, there exists some common ratio that will ascertain arithmetically the amount of the debt at the end of each war, as certainly as the fact is now known to be, that ratio will in like manner determine what the amount of the debt will be in all future wars, and will ascertain the period within which the funding system will expire in a bankruptcy of the government; for the ratio I allude to is the ratio which the nature of the thing has established for itself.

Hitherto no idea has been entertained that any such ratio existed, or could exist, that could determine a problem of this kind, that is, that could ascertain, without having any knowledge of the fact, what the expence of any former war had been, or what the expence of any future war would be; but it is nevertheless true that such a ratio does exist, as I shall shew, and also the mode of applying it.

The ratio I allude to is not in arithmetical progression, like the numbers

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9;

nor yet in geometrical progression, like the numbers

2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256;

but

but is in the series of one half upon each preceding number; like the numbers

8, 12, 18, 27, 40, 60, 90, 135.

Any person can perceive that the second number, 12, is produced by the preceding number, 8, and half 8; and that the third number, 18, is in like manner produced by the preceding number, 12, and half 12; and so on for the rest. They can also see how rapidly the sums increase as the ratio proceeds. The difference between the two first numbers is but four; but the difference between the two last is forty-five: and from thence they may see with what immense rapidity the national debt has increased, and will continue to increase, till it exceeds the ordinary powers of calculation, and loses itself in cyphers.

I come now to apply the ratio as a rule to determine all the cases.

I begin with the war that ended in 1697, which was the war in which the funding system began. The expence of that war was twenty-one millions and an half. In order to ascertain the expence of the next war, I add to twenty-one millions and an half, the half thereof (ten millions and three quarters), which makes thirty-two millions and a quarter for the expence of that war. This thirty-two millions and a quarter, added to the former debt of twenty-one millions and an half,

carries the national debt to fifty-three millions and three quarters. Smith, in his chapter on Public Debts, says, The national debt was at this time fifty-three millions.

I proceed to ascertain the expence of the next war, that of 1739, by adding, as in the former case, one half to the expence of the preceding war. The expence of the preceding war was thirty-two millions and a quarter; for the sake of even numbers, say thirty-two millions; the half of which (16) makes forty-eight millions for the expence of that war.

I proceed to ascertain the expence of the war of 1756, by adding, according to the ratio, one half to the expence of the preceding war. The expence of the preceding war was taken at 48 millions, the half of which (24) makes 72 millions for the expence of that war. Smith (chapter on Public Debts) says, the expence of the war of 1756 was 72 millions and a quarter.

I proceed to ascertain the expence of the American war, of 1775, by adding, as in the former cases, one half to the expence of the preceding war. The expence of the preceding war was 72 millions, the half of which (36) makes 108 millions for the expence of that war. In the last edition of Smith (chapter on Public Debts) he says, the
expence

expenditure of the American war was *more than an hundred millions.*

I come now to ascertain the expenditure of the present war, supposing it to continue as long as former wars have done, and the funding system not to break up before that period. The expenditure of the preceding war was 108 millions, the half of which (54) makes 162 millions for the expenditure of the present war. It gives symptoms of going beyond this sum, supposing the funding system not to break up; for the loans of the last year and of the present year, are twenty-two millions each, which exceeds the ratio compared with the loans of the preceding war. It will not be from the inability of procuring loans that the system will break up. On the contrary, it is the facility with which loans can be procured, that hastens that event. The loans are altogether paper transactions; and it is the excess of them that brings on, with accelerating speed, that progressive depreciation of funded paper money that will dissolve the funding system.

I proceed to ascertain the expenditure of future wars, and I do this merely to shew the impossibility of the continuance of the funding system, and the certainty of its dissolution.

The

The expence of the next war after the present war, according to the ratio that has ascertained the preceding cases will be ——— 243 millions

Expence of the second war ——— 364 millions

————— third war ——— 546 millions

————— fourth war ——— 819 millions

————— fifth war ——— 1228 millions

—————
3200 millions

which, at only 4 per cent, will require taxes to the nominal amount of one hundred twenty-eight millions to pay the annual interest, besides the interest of the present debt, and the expences of government, which are not included in this account. Is there a man so mad, so stupid, as to suppose this system can continue ?

When I first conceived the idea of seeking for some common ratio that should apply as a rule of measurement to all the cases of the funding system, so far as to ascertain the several stages of its approach to dissolution, I had no expectation that any ratio could be found that would apply with so much exactness as this does. I was led to the idea merely by observing that the funding system was a thing in continual progression, and that whatever was in a state of progression might be supposed to admit of, at least, some general ratio of measurement,

ment, that would apply without any very great variation. But who could have supposed that falling systems, or falling opinions, admitted of a ratio apparently as true as the descent of falling bodies? I have not *made* the ratio, any more than Newton made the ratio of gravitation. I have only discovered it, and explained the mode of applying it.

To shew at one view the rapid progression of the funding system to destruction, and to expose the folly of those who blindly believe in its continuance, or who artfully endeavor to impose that belief upon others, I exhibit in the annexed table, the expence of each of the six wars since the funding system began, as ascertained by the ratio, and the expence of six wars yet to come, ascertained by the same ratio,

First six wars.	1	-	-	21 millions	Second six wars	1	-	-	243 millions
	2	-	-	33 millions		2	-	-	364 millions
	3	-	-	48 millions		3	-	-	546 millions
	4	-	-	72 millions*		4	-	-	819 millions
	5	-	-	108 millions		5	-	-	1228 millions
	6	-	-	162 millions		6	-	-	1842 millions
<hr/>					<hr/>				
Total	-	-	-	444 millions	Total	-	-	-	5042 millions

Those

* The actual expence of the war of 1739 did not come up to the sum ascertained by the ratio. But as that which is the natural disposition of a thing, as it is the natural disposition of a stream of water to descend, will, if impeded in

Those who are acquainted with the power with which even a small ratio, acting in progression, multiplies in a long series, will see nothing to wonder at in this table. Those who are not acquainted with that subject, and not knowing what else to say, may be inclined to deny it. But it is not their opinion one way, nor mine the other, that can influence the event. The table exhibits the natural march of the funding system to its irredeemable dissolution.—Supposing the present government of England to continue, and to go on as it has gone on since the funding system began, I would not give twenty shillings for one hundred pounds in the funds to be paid twenty years hence. I do not speak this predictively; I produce the data upon

in its course, overcome by a new effort what it had lost by that impediment, so it was with respect to this war and the next (1756), taken collectively; for the expence of the war 1756 restored the equilibrium of the ratio, as fully as if it had not been impeded. A circumstance that serves to prove the truth of the ratio more fully than if the interruption had not taken place. The war of 1739 was languid: the efforts were below the value of money at that time: for the ratio is the measure of the depreciation of money in consequence of the funding system; or what comes to the same end, it is the measure of the increase of paper. Every additional quantity of it, whether in bank-notes or otherwise, diminishes the *real*, though not the *nominal*, value of the former quantity.

which

which that belief is founded: and which data it is every body's interest to know, who have any thing to do with the funds, or who are going to bequeath property to their descendants to be paid at a future day.

Perhaps it may be asked, that as governments or ministers proceeded by no ratio in making loans or incurring debts, and as nobody intended any ratio, or thought of any, how does it happen that there is one? I answer, that the ratio is founded in necessity; and I now go to explain what that necessity is.

It will always happen, that the price of labor, or of the produce of labor, be that produce what it may, will be in proportion to the quantity of money in a country, admitting things to take their natural course. Before the invention of the funding system, there was no other money than gold, and silver; and as nature gives out those metals with a sparing hand, and in regular annual quantities from the mines, the several prices of things were proportioned to the quantity of money at that time, and so nearly stationary as to vary but little in any fifty or sixty years of that period.

When the funding system began, a substitute for gold and silver began also. That substitute was paper; and the quantity of it increased as the quantity of interest increased upon accumulated loans.

loans. This appearance of a new and additional species of money in the nation soon began to break the relative value which money and the things it will purchase bore to each other before. Every thing rose in price; but the rise at first was little and slow, like the difference in units between the two first numbers, 8 and 12, compared with the two last numbers, 90 and 135, in the table. It was however sufficient to make itself considerably felt in a large transaction. When therefore government, by engaging in a new war, required a new loan, it was obliged to make a higher loan than the former loan, to balance the increased price to which things had risen; and as that new loan increased the quantity of paper in proportion to the new quantity of interest, it carried the price of things still higher than before. The next loan was again higher, to balance that further increased price; and all this in the same manner, though not in the same degree, that every new emission of continental money in America, or of assignats in France, were greater than the preceding emission, to make head against the advance of prices, till the combat could be maintained no longer. Herein is founded the necessity of which I have just spoken. That necessity proceeds with accelerating velocity, and the ratio I have laid down is the measure of that acceleration; or, to speak the technical language
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of the subject, it is the measure of the increasing depreciation of funded paper money, which it is impossible to prevent, while the quantity of that money and of bank notes continues to multiply. What else but this can account for the difference between one war costing 21 millions, and another war costing 160 millions?

The difference cannot be accounted for on the score of extraordinary efforts or extraordinary achievements. The war that cost 21 millions was the war of the confederates, historically called the grand alliance, consisting of England, Austria, and Holland, in the time of William the Third, against Louis the Fourteenth, and in which the confederates were victorious. The present is a war of a much greater confederacy—a confederacy of England, Austria, Prussia, the German Empire, Spain, Holland, Naples, and Sardinia, eight powers against the French Republic singly, and the Republic has beaten the whole confederacy.—But to return to my subject.—

It is said in England, that the value of paper keeps equal with the value of gold and silver. But the case is not rightly stated; for the fact is, that the paper has *pulled down* the value of gold and silver to a level with itself. Gold and silver will not purchase so much of any purchasable article at this day as if no paper had appeared, nor so
much

much as it will in any country in Europe where there is no paper. How long this hanging together of money and paper will continue makes a new case; because it daily exposes the system to sudden death, independent of the natural death it would otherwise suffer.

I consider the funding system as being now advanced into the last twenty years of its existence. The single circumstance, were there no other, that a war should now cost *nominally* one hundred and sixty millions, which when the system began cost but twenty-one millions, or that the loan for one year only (including the loan to the Emperor) should now be *nominally* greater than the whole expence of that war, shews the state of depreciation to which the funding system has arrived. Its depreciation is in the proportion of eight for one, compared with the value of its money when the system began; which is the state the French assignats stood in a year ago (March, 1795), compared with gold and silver. It is therefore that I say, that the English funding system, has entered into the last twenty years of its existence, comparing each twenty years of the English system with every single year of the American and French systems, as before stated.

Again, supposing the present war to close as former wars have done, and without producing either
 revolu-

revolution or reform in England, another war, at least must be looked for in the space of the twenty years I allude to; for it has never yet happened that twenty years have passed off without a war, and that more especially since the English government has dabbled in German politics, and shewn a disposition to insult the world, and the world of commerce, with her navy. That next war will carry the national debt to very nearly seven hundred millions, the interest of which, at four per cent, will be twenty-eight millions, besides the taxes for the (then) expences of government, which will increase in the same proportion, and which will carry the taxes to at least forty millions; and if another war only begins, it will quickly carry them to above fifty; for it is in the last twenty years of the funding system, as in the last year of the American and French systems without funding, that all the great shocks begin to operate.

I have just mentioned that paper, in England, has *pulled down* the value of gold and silver to a level with itself; and that this *pulling down* of gold and silver money has created the appearance of paper money keeping up. The same thing, and the same mistake, took place in America and in France, and continued for a considerable time after the commencement of their system of paper; and

the actual depreciation of money was hidden under that mistake.

It was said in America, at that time, that every thing was becoming *dear* ; but gold and silver could then buy those dear articles no cheaper than paper could ; and therefore it was not called depreciation. The idea of *dearneys* established itself for the idea of depreciation. The same was the case in France. Though every thing rose in price soon after assignats appeared, yet those dear articles could be purchased no cheaper with gold and silver than with paper, and it was only said that things were *dear*. The same is still the language in England. They call it *dearneys*. But they will soon find that it is an actual depreciation, and that this depreciation is the effect of the funding system ; which, by crowding such a continually-increasing mass of paper into circulation, carries down the value of gold and silver with it. But gold and silver will, in the long run, revolt against depreciation, and separate from the value of paper ; for the progress of all such systems appears to be, that the paper will take the command in the beginning, and gold and silver in the end.

But this succession in the command of gold and silver over paper, makes a crisis far more eventful to the funding system than to any other system upon which paper can be issued ; for, strictly
speak-

speaking, it is not a crisis of danger, but a symptom of death. It is a death stroke to the funding system. It is a revolution in the whole of its affairs.

If paper be issued without being funded upon interest, emissions of it can be continued after the value of it separates from gold and silver, as we have seen in the two cases of America and France. But the funding system rests altogether upon the value of paper being equal to gold and silver; which will be as long as the paper can continue carrying down the value of gold and silver to the same level to which itself descends, and no longer. But even in this state, that of descending equally together, the minister, whoever he may be, will find himself beset with accumulating difficulties; because the loans and taxes voted for the service of each ensuing year will wither in his hands before the year expires, or before they can be applied. This will force him to have recourse to emissions of what are called exchequer and navy bills, which, by still increasing the mass of paper in circulation, will drive on the depreciation still more rapidly.

It ought to be known that taxes in England are not paid in gold and silver, but in paper (bank notes). Every person who pays any considerable quantity of taxes, such as maltsters, brewers, dis-

tillers (I appeal for the truth of it to any of the collectors of excise in England, or to Mr. Whitbread), knows this to be the case. There is not gold and silver enough in the nation to pay the taxes in coin, as I shall shew; and consequently there is not money enough in the bank to pay the notes. The interest of the national funded debt is paid at the bank in the same kind of paper, in which the taxes are collected. When people find, as they will find, a reservedness among each other in giving gold and silver for bank notes, or the least preference for the former over the latter, they will go for payment to the bank, where they have a right to go. They will do this as a measure of prudence, each one for himself, and the truth or delusion of the funding system will then be proved.

I have said in the foregoing paragraph that there is not gold and silver enough in the nation to pay the taxes in coin, and consequently that there cannot be enough in the bank to pay the notes. As I do not chuse to rest any thing upon assertion, I appeal for the truth of this to the publications of Mr. Eden (now called Lord Auckland), and George Chalmers, Secretary to the Board of Trade and Plantation, of which Jenkinson (now called Lord Hawkesbury) is president. [These sort of folks change their names so often, that it
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is as difficult to know them as it is to know a thief.] Chalmers gives the quantity of gold and silver coin from the returns of coinage at the mint; and, after deducting for the light gold recoined, says, that the amount of gold and silver coin is *about twenty millions*. He had better not have proved this, especially if he had reflected, that *public credit is suspicion asleep*. The quantity is much too little.

Of this twenty millions (which is not a fourth part of the quantity of gold and silver there is in France, as is shewn in Mr. Necker's Treatise on the Administration of the Finances) three millions at least must be supposed to be in Ireland, some in Scotland, and in the West Indies, Newfoundland, &c. The quantity therefore in England cannot be more than sixteen millions, which is four millions less than the amount of the taxes. But admitting there to be sixteen millions, not more than a fourth part thereof (four millions) can be in London, when it is considered that every city, town, village, and farm-house in the nation must have a part of it, and that all the great manufactories, which most require cash, are out of London. Of this four millions in London, every banker, merchant, tradesman, in short every individual must have some. He must be a poor shop-keeper indeed, who has not a few guineas in his till.

The quantity of cash therefore in the bank can never, on the evidence of circumstances, be so much as two millions; most probably not more than one million; and on this slender twig, always liable to be broken, hangs the whole funding system of four hundred millions, besides many millions in bank notes. The sum in the bank is not sufficient to pay one-fourth of only one year's interest of the national debt, were the creditors to demand payment in cash, or to demand cash for the bank-notes in which the interest is paid. A circumstance always liable to happen.

One of the amusements that has kept up the farce of the funding system is, that the interest is regularly paid. But as the interest is always paid in bank notes, and as bank notes can always be coined for the purpose, this mode of payment proves nothing. The point of proof is, can the bank give cash for the bank notes on which the interest is paid? If it cannot, and it is evident it cannot, some millions of bank notes must go without payment, and those holders of bank notes who apply last will be worst off. When the present quantity of cash in the bank be paid away, it is next to impossible to see how any new quantity is to arrive. None will arrive from taxes, for the taxes will all be paid in bank notes; and should the government refuse bank notes in payment of taxes,

taxes, the credit of bank notes will be gone at once. No cash will arrive from the business of discounting merchants bills; for every merchant will pay off those bills in bank notes, and not in cash. There is therefore no means left for the bank to obtain a new supply of cash, after the present quantity be paid away. But, besides the impossibility of paying the interest of the funded debt in cash, there are many thousand persons in London and in the country, who are holders of bank notes that came into their hands in the fair way of trade, and who are not stock-holders in the funds; and as such persons have had no hand in increasing the demand upon the bank, as those have had who, for their own private interest, like Boyd and others, are contracting, or pretending to contract, for new loans, they will conceive they have a just right their bank notes should be paid first. Boyd has been very sly in France, in changing his paper into cash. He will be just as sly in doing the same thing in London; for he has learned to calculate: and then it is probable he will set off for America.

A stoppage of payment at the bank is not a new thing. Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*, book 2, chap. 2, says, that in the year 1696, exchequer bills fell forty, fifty, and sixty per cent. bank notes twenty per cent, and the bank stopt payment.—

That which happened in 1696 may happen again in 1796. The period in which it happened was the last year of the war of king William. It necessarily put a stop to the further emission of exchequer and navy Bills, and to the raising of new loans; and the peace which took place the next year was probably hurried on by this circumstance, and saved the bank from bankruptcy. Smith, in speaking of the circumstances of the bank, upon another occasion, says (book 2, chap. 2,)—"This great company has been reduced to the necessity of paying in sixpences." When a bank adopts the expedient of paying in sixpences, it is a confession of insolvency.

It is worthy of observation, that every case of a failure in finances, since the system of paper began, has produced a revolution in governments, either total or partial. A failure in the finances of France produced the French revolution. A failure in the finance of the assignats broke up the revolutionary government, and produced the present French Constitution. A failure in the finances of the old Congress of America, and the embarrassments it brought upon commerce, broke up the system of the old confederation, and produced the present federal constitution. If then we admit of reasoning by comparison of causes and events, a failure in the

English

English finances will produce some change in the government of that country.

As to Mr. Pitt's project of paying off the national debt by applying a million a year for that purpose, while he continues adding more than twenty millions a year to it, it is like setting a man with a wooden leg to run after a hare. The longer he runs the farther he is off.

When I said that the funding system had entered the last twenty years of its existence, I certainly did not mean that it would continue twenty years, and then expire as a lease would do. I meant to describe that age of decrepitude in which death is every day to be expected, and life cannot continue long. But the death of credit, or that state that is called bankruptcy, is not always marked by those progressive stages of visible decline, that mark the decline of natural life. In the progression of natural life, age cannot counterfeit youth, nor conceal the departure of juvenile abilities. But it is otherwise with respect to the death of credit; for though all the approaches to bankruptcy may actually exist in circumstances, they admit of being concealed by appearances. Nothing is more common than to see the bankrupt of to-day a man in credit but the day before; yet no sooner is the real state of his affairs known, than every body can see he had been insolvent long before. In London, the greatest theatre

theatre of bankruptcy in Europe, this part of the subject will be well and feelingly understood.

Mr. Pitt continually talks of credit, and of the national resources. These are two of the feigned appearances by which the approaches to bankruptcy are concealed. That which he calls credit may exist, as I have just shewn, in a state of insolvency, and is always what I have before described it to be, *suspicion asleep*.

As to national resources, Mr. Pitt, like all the English financiers that preceded him since the funding system began, has uniformly mistaken the nature of a resource; that is, they have mistaken it consistently with the delusion of the funding system; but time is explaining the delusion. That which he calls, and which they called, a resource, is not a resource, but is the *anticipation* of a resource. They have anticipated what *would have been* a resource in another generation, had not the use of it been so anticipated. The funding system is a system of anticipation. Those who established it an hundred years ago, anticipated the resources of those who were to live an hundred years after; for the people of the present day have to pay the interest of the debts contracted at that time, and of all debts contracted since. But it is the last feather that breaks the horse's back. Had the system began an hundred years before, the amount of
taxes

taxes at this time to pay the annual interest at four per cent. (could we suppose such a system of infinity could have continued) would be two hundred and twenty millions annually; for the capital of the debt would be 5486 millions, according to the ratio that ascertains the expence of the wars for the hundred years that are past. But long before it could have reached this period, the value of bank notes, from the immense quantity of them, (for it is in paper only that such a nominal revenue could be collected) would have been as low or lower than continental paper money has been in America, or assignats in France; and as to the idea of exchanging them for gold and silver, it is too absurd to be contradicted.

Do we not see that nature, in all her operations, disowns the visionary basis upon which the funding system is built? She acts always by renewed successions, and never by accumulating additions perpetually progressing. Animals and vegetables, men and trees, have existed ever since the world began; but that existence has been carried on by successions of generations, and not by continuing the same men and the same trees in existence that existed first; and to make room for the new she removes the old. Every natural idiot can see this. It is the stock-jobbing idiot only that mistakes. He has conceived that art can do what nature cannot.

not. He is teaching her a new system—that there is no occasion for man to die—That the scheme of creation can be carried on upon the plan of the funding system—That it can proceed by continual additions of new beings, like new loans, and all live together in eternal youth. Go, count the graves, thou ideot, and learn the folly of thy arithmetic.

But besides these things, there is something visibly farcical in the whole operation of loaning. It is scarcely more than four years ago that such a rot of bankruptcy spread itself over London, that the whole commercial fabric tottered; trade and credit were at a stand; and such was the state of things, that to prevent, or suspend, a general bankruptcy, the government lent the merchants six millions in *government* paper, and now the merchants lend the government twenty-two millions in *their* paper; and two parties, Boyd and Morgan, men but little known, contend who shall be the lenders. What a farce is this! It reduces the operation of loaning to accommodation paper, in which the competitors contend, not who shall lend, but who shall sign, because there is something to be got for signing.

Every English stock-jobber and minister boasts of the credit of England. Its credit, say they, is greater than that of any country in Europe. There is a good reason for this; for there is not another country

try

try in Europe that could be made the dupe of such a delusion. The English funding system will remain a monument of wonder, not so much on account of the extent to which it has been carried, as of the folly of believing in it.

Those who had formerly predicted that the funding system would break up when the debt should amount to one hundred or one hundred and fifty millions, erred only in not distinguishing between insolvency and actual bankruptcy; for the insolvency commenced as soon as the government became unable to pay the interest in cash, or to give cash for the bank notes in which the interest was paid, whether that inability was known or not, or whether it was suspected or not. Insolvency always takes place before bankruptcy; for bankruptcy is nothing more than the publication of that insolvency. In the affairs of an individual, it often happens that insolvency exists several years before bankruptcy, and that the insolvency is concealed and carried on till the individual is not able to pay one shilling in the pound. A government can ward off bankruptcy longer than an individual; but insolvency will inevitably produce bankruptcy, whether in an individual or in a government. If then the quantity of bank notes payable on demand, which the bank has issued, are greater than the bank can pay off,

off, the bank is insolvent; and when that insolvency be declared, it is bankruptcy.*

I come

* Among the delusions that have been imposed upon the nation by ministers, to give a false coloring to its affairs, and by none more than by Mr. Pitt, is a motley, amphibious charactered thing called the *balance of trade*. This balance of trade, as it is called, is taken from the custom-house books, in which entries are made of all cargoes exported, and also of all cargoes imported, in each year; and when the value of the exports, according to the price set upon them by the exporter or by the custom-house, is greater than the value of the imports, estimated in the same manner, they say, the balance of trade is so much in their favor.

The custom-house books prove regularly enough that so many cargoes have been exported, and so many imported; but this is all that they prove, or were intended to prove. They have nothing to do with the balance of profit or loss; and it is ignorance to appeal to them upon that account: for the case is, that the greater the loss is in any one year, the higher will this thing called the balance of trade appear to be according to the custom-house books. For example, nearly the whole of the Mediterranean convoy has been taken by the French this year; consequently those cargoes will not appear as imports on the custom-house books, and therefore the balance of trade, by which they mean the profits of it, will appear to be so much the greater as the loss amounts to; and, on the other hand, had the loss not happened, the profits would have appeared to have been so much the less. All the losses happening at sea to returning cargoes, by accidents, by the elements, or by capture, make the balance appear the higher on the side of the exports; and were they

I come now to shew the several ways by which bank notes get into circulation. I shall afterwards offer an estimate on the total quantity or amount of bank notes existing at this moment.

The bank acts in three capacities. As a bank of discount; as a bank of deposit; and as banker for the government.

First, as a bank of discount. The bank discounts merchants bills of exchange for two months. When a merchant has a bill that will become due at the end of two months, and wants payment before that time, the bank advances that payment to him, deducting therefrom at the rate of five per cent. per ann. The bill of exchange remains at the bank as a pledge or pawn, and at the end of two months it must be redeemed. This transaction is done altogether in paper; for the profits of the bank, as a

they all lost at sea, it would appear to be all profit on the custom-house books. Also every cargo of exports that is lost that occasions another to be sent, adds in like manner to the side of the exports, and appears as profit. This year the balance of trade will appear high, because the losses have been great by capture and by storms. The ignorance of the British Parliament, in listening to this hackneyed imposition of ministers about the balance of trade, is astonishing. It shews how little they know of national affairs; and Mr. Grey may as well talk Greek to them, as make motions about the state of the nation. They understand fox-hunting and the game-laws.

bank

bank of discount, arise entirely from its making use of paper as money. The bank gives bank notes to the merchant in discounting the bill of exchange, and the redeemer of the bill pays bank notes to the bank in redeeming it. It very seldom happens that any real money passes between them.

If the profits of a bank be, for example, two hundred thousand pounds a year (a great sum to be made merely by exchanging one sort of paper for another, and which shews also that the merchants of that place are pressed for money for payments, instead of having money to spare to lend to government), it proves that the bank discounts to the amount of four millions annually, or 666,666l. every two months ; and as there never remain in the bank more than two months pledges, of the value of 666,666l. at any one time, the amount of bank notes in circulation at any one time should not be more than to that amount. This is sufficient to shew that the present immense quantity of bank notes, which are distributed through every city, town, village, and farm-house in England, cannot be accounted for on the score of discounting.

Secondly, as a bank of deposit. To deposit money at the bank means to lodge it there for the sake of convenience, and to be drawn out at any moment the depositor pleases, or to be paid away to his order. When the business of discounting is great, that of
depositing

depositing is necessarily small. No man deposits and applies for discounts at the same time; for it would be like paying interest for lending money, instead of for borrowing it. The deposits that are now made at the bank are almost entirely in bank notes, and consequently they add nothing to the ability of the bank to pay off the bank notes that may be presented for payment; and besides this, the deposits are no more the property of the bank than the cash or bank notes in a merchant's counting house are the property of his book-keeper. No great increase therefore of bank notes, beyond what the discounting business admits, can be accounted for on the score of deposits.

Thirdly. The bank acts as banker for the government. This is the connection that threatens ruin to every public bank. It is through this connection that the credit of a bank is forced far beyond what it ought to be, and still further beyond its ability to pay. It is through this connection that such an immense redundant quantity of bank notes have gotten into circulation; and which, instead of being issued because there was property in the bank, have been issued because there was none.

When the treasury is empty, which happens in almost every year of every war, its coffers at the bank are empty also. It is in this condition of emptiness that the minister has recourse to emissions

of what are called exchequer and navy bills, which continually generates a new increase of bank notes, and which are sported upon the public without there being property in the bank to pay them.— These exchequer and navy bills (being, as I have said, emitted because the treasury and its coffers at the bank are empty, and cannot pay the demands that come in) are no other than an acknowledgement that the bearer is entitled to receive so much money. They may be compared to the settlement of an account, in which the debtor acknowledges the balance he owes, and for which he gives a note of hand; or to a note of hand given to raise money upon it.

Sometimes the bank discounts those bills as it would discount merchants bills of exchange; sometimes it purchases them of the holders at the current price; and sometimes it agrees with the minister to pay an interest upon them to the holders, and keep them in circulation. In every one of those cases an additional quantity of bank notes get into circulation, and are sported, as I have said, upon the public, without there being property in the bank, as banker for the government, to pay them: and besides this, the bank has now no money of its own; for the money that was originally subscribed to begin the credit of the bank with at its first

first establishment, has been lent to government, and wasted long ago.

“ The bank (says Smith, book 2, chap. 2,) acts “ not only as an ordinary bank, but as a great engine of state; it receives and pays the greater “ part of the annuities which are due to the creditors of the *public*.” (It is worth observing, that the *public*, or the *nation*, is always put for the government in speaking of debts.) “ It circulates (says Smith) “ exchequer bills, and it advances to “ government the annual amount of the land and “ malt-taxes, which are frequently not paid till “ several years afterwards.” (This advancement is also done in bank notes, for which there is not property in the bank.) “ In those different operations, (says Smith) *its duty to the public* may “ sometimes have obliged it, without any fault of “ its directors, *to overstock the circulation with paper “ money,*”—bank notes. How *its duty to the public* can induce it *to overstock that public* with promissory bank notes which it *cannot pay*, and thereby expose the individuals of that public to ruin, is too paradoxical to be explained; for it is on the credit which individuals *give to the bank*, by receiving and circulating its notes, and not upon its *own* credit or its *own* property, for it has none, that the bank supports. If however it be the duty of the bank to expose the public to this hazard, it is at least equally

the duty of the individuals of that public to get their money and take care of themselves; and leave it to placemen, pensioners, government contractors, Reeves's association, and the members of both houses of Parliament, who have voted away the money at the nod of the minister, to continue the credit if they can, and for which their estates individually and collectively ought to answer, as far as they will go.

There has always existed, and still exists, a mysterious, suspicious connection, between the minister and the directors of the bank, and which explains itself no otherways than by a continual increase of bank notes. Without, therefore, entering into any further details of the various contrivances by which bank notes are issued, and thrown upon the public, I proceed, as I before mentioned, to offer an estimate on the total quantity of bank notes in circulation.

However disposed governments may be to wring money by taxes from the people, there is a limit to the practice established in the nature of things. That limit is the proportion between the quantity of money in a nation, be that quantity what it may, and the greatest quantity of taxes that can be raised upon it. People have other uses for money besides paying taxes; and it is only a proportional part of that money they can spare for taxes, as it is only a
pro-

proportional part they can spare for house-rent, for clothing, or for any other particular use. These proportions find out and establish themselves; and that with such exactness, that if any one part exceeds its proportion, all the other parts feel it.

Before the invention of paper money (bank notes), there was no other money in the nation than gold and silver, and the greatest quantity of money that ever was raised in taxes during that period, never exceeded a fourth part of the quantity of money in the nation. It was high taxing when it came to this point. The taxes in the time of William the Third never reached to four millions before the invention of paper, and the quantity of money in the nation at that time was estimated to be about sixteen millions. The same proportions established themselves in France. There was no paper money in France before the present revolution, and the taxes were collected in gold and silver money. The highest quantity of taxes never exceeded twenty-two millions sterling; and the quantity of gold and silver money in the nation at the same time, as stated by Mr. Neckar, from returns of coinage at the mints, in his Treatise on the Administration of the Finances, was about ninety millions sterling. To go beyond this limit of a fourth part, in England, they were obliged to introduce paper money; and the attempt to go beyond it in France, where

where paper could not be introduced, broke up the government. This proportion therefore of a fourth part, is the limit which the nature of the thing establishes for itself, be the quantity of money in a nation more or less.

The amount of taxes in England at this time is full twenty millions; and therefore the quantity of gold and silver, and of bank notes, taken together, amounts to eighty millions. The quantity of gold and silver, as stated by Lord Hawkesbury's secretary (George Chalmers), as I have before shewn, is twenty millions; and therefore the total amount of bank notes in circulation, all made payable on demand, is sixty millions. This enormous sum will astonish the most stupid stock-jobber, and overpower the credulity of the most thoughtless Englishman: but were it only a third part of that sum, the bank cannot pay half a crown in the pound.

There is something curious in the movements of this modern complicated machine, the funding system; and it is only now that it is beginning to unfold the full extent of its movements. In the first part of its movements it gives great powers into the hands of government, and in the last part it takes them completely away.

The funding system set out with raising revenues under the name of loans, by means of which government became both prodigal and powerful,
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The loaners assumed the name of creditors, and though it was soon discovered that loaning was government jobbing, those pretended loaners, or the persons who purchased into the funds afterwards, conceived themselves not only to be creditors, but to be the *only* creditors.

But such has been the operation of this complicated machine, the funding system, that it has produced, unperceived, a second generation of creditors, more numerous and far more formidable, and withal more real than the first generation; for every holder of a bank note is a creditor, and a real creditor, and the debt due to him is made payable on demand. The debt therefore which the government owes to individuals is composed of two parts; the one about four hundred millions bearing interest, the other about sixty millions payable on demand. The one is called the funded debt, the other is the debt due in bank notes.

This second debt (that contained in the bank notes) has, in a great measure, been incurred to pay the interest of the first debt; so that in fact little or no real interest has been paid by government. The whole has been delusion and fraud. Government first contracted a debt in the form of loans with one class of people, and then run clandestinely into debt with another class, by means of bank notes, to pay the interest. Government acted

of

of itself in contracting the first debt, and made a machine of the bank to contract the second.

It is this second debt that changes the seat of power and the order of things; for it puts it in the power of even a small part of the holders of bank-notes (had they no other motive than disgust at Pitt and Grenville's sedition bills) to controul any measure of government they found to be injurious to their interest; and that not by popular meetings, or popular societies, but by the simple and easy operation of with-holding their credit from that government; that is, by individually demanding payment at the bank for every bank-note that comes into their hands. Why should Pitt and Grenville expect that the very men whom they insult and injure should at the same time continue to support the measures of Pitt and Grenville, by giving credit to their promissory notes of payment? No new emissions of bank-notes could go on while payment was demanding on the old and the cash in the bank wasting daily away; nor any new advances be made to government or to the emperor to carry on the war; nor any new emission be made of exchequer bills.

"*The bank*," says Smith, (book ii. ch. 2.) "is a great engine of state." And in the same paragraph he says, "*The stability of the bank is equal to that of the British government*;" which is the same

same as to say that the stability of the government is equal to that of the bank, and no more. If then the bank cannot pay, the *arch-treasurer of the holy Roman empire* (S. R. I. A.*) is a bankrupt. When Folly invented titles, she did not attend to their application; for ever since the government of England has been in the hands of *arch-treasurers*, it has been running into bankruptcy; and as to the *arch-treasurer apparent*, he has been a bankrupt long ago. What a miserable prospect has England before its eyes!

Before the war of 1755 there were no bank notes over than twenty pounds. During that war bank notes of fifteen pounds and of ten pounds were coined; and now, since the commencement of the present war, they are coined as low as five pounds. These five pounds notes will circulate chiefly among little shop keepers, butchers, bakers, market people, renters of small houses, lodgers, &c. All the high departments of commerce, and the affluent stations of life were already *overstocked*, as Smith expresses it, with the bank notes. No place remained open wherein to crowd an additional quantity of bank notes but among the class of people I have just mentioned, and the means of doing this could be best effected by coining five pound notes. This conduct has the appearance of that of an un-

* Part of the inscription on an English guinea.

principled insolvent who, when on the verge of bankruptcy to the amount of many thousands, will borrow as low as five pounds of the servants in his house, and break the next day.

But whatever momentary relief or aid the minister and his bank might expect from this low contrivance of five pound notes, it will increase the inability of the bank to pay the higher notes, and hasten the destruction of all; for even the small taxes that used to be paid in money will now be paid in those notes, and the bank will soon find itself with scarcely any other money than what the hair powder guinea tax brings in.

The bank notes make the most serious part of the business of finance; what is called the national funded debt is but a trifle when put in comparison with it; yet the case of the bank notes has never been touched upon. But it certainly ought to be known upon what authority, whether that of the minister or of the directors, and upon what foundation, such immense quantities are issued. I have stated the amount of them at sixty millions sterling; I have produced data for that estimation; and besides this, the apparent quantity of them, far beyond that of gold and silver in the nation, corroborates therewith. But were there but a third part of sixty millions, the bank cannot pay half a crown in the pound; for no new supply of money,

as

as before said, can arrive at the bank, as all the taxes will be paid in paper.

When the funding system began, it was not doubted that the loans that had been borrowed would be repaid. Government not only propagated that belief, but it began paying them off. In time this profession came to be abandoned; and it is not difficult to see that bank notes will march the same way; for the amount of them is only another debt under another name; and the probability is, that Mr. Pitt will at last propose funding them. In that case bank notes will not be so valuable as French assignats. The assignats have a solid property in reserve in the national domains; bank notes have none; and besides this, the English revenue must then sink down to what the amount of it was before the funding system began; between three and four millions. One of which the *arch-treasurer* would require for himself, and the arch-treasurer *apparent* would require three quarters of a million more to pay his debts. “*In France,*” says Sterne, “*they order these things better.*”

I have now exposed the English system of finance to the eyes of all nations; for this work will be published in all languages. In doing this, I have done an act of justice to those numerous citizens of neutral nations who have been imposed
upon

upon by that fraudulent system, and who have property at stake upon the event.

As an individual citizen of America, and as far as an individual can go, I have revenged (if I may use the expression without any immoral meaning) the piratical depredations committed on the American commerce by the English government.—I have retaliated for France on the subject of finance; and I conclude with retorting on Mr. Pitt the expression he used against France, and say, that the English system of finance “IS ON THE VERGE, “NAY EVEN IN THE GULPH OF BANKRUPTCY.”

THOMAS PAINE.

*Paris, 19th Germinal,
4th year of the Republic.
April 8, 1796.*

THE
AGE OF REASON.

Part the First.

BEING

AN INVESTIGATION

OF

TRUE AND FABULOUS THEOLOGY.

BY THOMAS PAINE,

Author of the Works intituled,

COMMON SENSE—RIGHTS OF MAN, PART FIRST AND SECOND, AND DIS-
SERATIONS ON FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT.

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PART THE FIRST.

IT has been my intention, for several years past, to publish my thoughts upon religion. I am well aware of the difficulties that attend the subject; and from that consideration, had reserved it to a more advanced period of life. I intended it to be the last offering I should make to my fellow-citizens of all nations: and that at a time when the purity of the motive that induced me to it, could not admit of a question, even by those who might disapprove the work.

The circumstance that has now taken place in France, of the total abolition of the whole national order of priesthood, and of every thing appertaining to compulsive systems of religion, and compulsive articles of faith, has not only precipitated my intention, but rendered a work of this kind exceedingly necessary; lest, in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of government, and false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true.

As several of my colleagues, and others of my fellow-citizens of France, have given me the example of making their voluntary and individual profession of faith, I also will make mine; and I do this with all that sincerity and frankness with which the mind of man communicates with itself.

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow-creatures happy.

But lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare

clare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise. They have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving: it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.

It is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and in order to *qualify* himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive any thing more destructive to morality than this!

Soon after I had published the pamphlet, COMMON SENSE, in America, I saw the exceeding probability that a revolution in the System of Government would be followed by a revolution in the System of Religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited, by pains and penalties, every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world: but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. Human inventions and priestcraft would be detected: and man would return to the pure, unmixed and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more.

Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ; their apostles and saints; and the Turks
their

their Mahomet; as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.

Each of those churches shew certain books which they call *revelation*, or the word of God. The Jews say, that their word of God was given by God to Moses face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God came by divine inspiration; and the Turks say, that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from Heaven. Each of those churches accuses the other of unbelief: and, for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

As it is necessary to affix right ideas to words, I will, before I proceed further into the subject, offer some observations on the word *revelation*. Revelation, when applied to religion, means something communicated *immediately* from God to man.

No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication if he pleases. But admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only. When he tells it to a second person, a second to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation to all those persons. It is revelation to the first person only, and *hearsay* to every other; and, consequently, they are not obliged to believe it.

It is a contradiction in terms and ideas to call any thing a revelation that comes to us at second hand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication. After this it is only an account of something which that person says was a revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent on me to believe it in the same manner, for it was not a revelation made to *me*, and I have only his word for it that it was made to him.

When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hand of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so. The commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity with them. They contain some good moral precepts, such as any man qualified to be a lawgiver, or a legislator, could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention.*

* This is, however, necessary, to except the declaration, which says, that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children. It is contrary to every principle of moral justice.

When I am told that the Koran was written in Heaven, and brought to Mahomet by an angel, the account comes to near the same kind of hearsay evidence and second hand authority, as the former. I did not see the angel myself, and therefore I have a right not to believe it.

When also I am told that a woman, called the Virgin Mary, said, or gave out, that she was with child without any cohabitation with a man, and that her betrothed husband, Joseph, said, that an angel told him so, I have a right to believe them or not: such a circumstance required a much stronger evidence than their bare word for it: but we have not even this: for neither Joseph nor Mary wrote any such matter themselves. It is only reported by others that *they said so*. It is hearsay upon hearsay, and I do not choose to rest my belief upon such evidence.

It is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the son of God. He was born when the Heathen mythology had still some fashion and repute in the world, and that mythology had prepared the people for the belief of such a story. Almost all the extraordinary men that lived under the Heathen mythology were reputed to be the sons of some of their gods. It was not a new thing at that time to believe a man to have been celestially begotten: the intercourse of gods with women was then a matter of familiar opinion. Their Jupiter, according to their accounts, had cohabited with hundreds: the story, therefore, had nothing in it either new, wonderful, or obscene: it was conformable to the opinions that then prevailed among the people called Gentiles, or mythologists, and it was those people only that believed it. The Jews, who had kept strictly to the belief of one God, and no more, and who had always rejected the Heathen mythology, never credited the story.

It is curious to observe how the theory of what is called the Christian Church, sprung out of the tail of the Heathen mythology. A direct incorporation took place, in the first instance, by making the reputed founder to be celestially begotten. The trinity of gods that then followed was no other than a reduction of the former plurality, which was about twenty or thirty thousand. The statue of Mary succeeded the statue of Diana of Ephesus. The deification of heroes changed into the canonization of saints. The mythologists had gods for every thing; the Christian mythologists had saints for every thing. The Church became as crowded with the one, as the Pantheon had been with the other; and Rome was the place of both. The
Christian

Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue ; and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud.

Nothing that is here said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the *real* character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind ; and though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers, many years before, by the Quakers since, and by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any.

Jesus Christ wrote no account of himself, of his birth, parentage, or any thing else. Not a line of what is called the New Testament is of his own writing. The history of him is altogether the work of other people ; and as to the account given of his resurrection and ascension, it was the necessary counterpart to the story of his birth. His historians having brought him into the world in a supernatural manner, were obliged to take him out again in the same manner, or the first part of the story must have fallen to the ground.

The wretched contrivance with which this latter part is told, exceeds every thing that went before it. The first part, that of the miraculous conception, was not a thing that admitted of publicity ; and therefore the tellers of this part of the story had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. They could not be expected to prove it, because it was not one of those things that admitted of proof, and it was impossible that the person of whom it was told could prove it himself.

But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different as to the evidence it admits of, to the invisible conception of a child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon day, to all Jerusalem at least. A thing which every body is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all and universal ; and as the public visibility of this last related act was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because that evidence never was given. Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say, they *saw* it, and all
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the rest of the world are called upon to believe it. But it appears that Thomas did not believe the resurrection; and, as they say, would not believe, without having ocular and manual demonstration himself. *So neither will I*; and the reason is equally as good for me and every other person, as for Thomas.

It is in vain to attempt to palliate or disguise this matter. The story, so far as relates to the supernatural part, has every mark of fraud and imposition stamped upon the face of it. Who were the authors of it is as impossible for us now to know as it is for us to be assured, that the books in which the account is related, were written by the persons whose names they bear. The best surviving evidence we now have respecting this affair is the Jews. They are regularly descended from the people who lived in the times this resurrection and ascension is said to have happened, and they say, *it is not true*. It has long appeared to me a strange inconsistency to cite the Jews as a proof of the truth of the story. It is just the same as if a man were to say, I will prove the truth of what I have told you, by producing the people who say it is false.

That such a person as Jesus Christ existed, and that he was crucified, which was the mode of execution at that day, are historical relations strictly within the limits of probability. He preached most excellent morality, and the equality of man; but he preached also against the corruptions and avarice of the Jewish priests, and this brought upon him the hatred and vengeance of the whole order of priesthood. The accusation which those priests brought against him, was that of sedition and conspiracy against the Roman government, to which the Jews were then subject and tributary; and it is not improbable that the Roman government might have some secret apprehension of the effects of his doctrine as well as the Jewish priests; neither is it improbable that Jesus Christ had in contemplation the delivery of the Jewish nation from the bondage of the Romans. Between the two, however, this virtuous reformer and revolutionist lost his life.

It is upon this plain narrative of facts, together with another case I am going to mention, that the Christian mythologists, calling themselves the Christian Church, have erected their fable, which for absurdity and extravagance is not exceeded by any thing that is to be found in the mythology of the ancients.

The ancient mythologists tell us, that the race of Giants made war against Jupiter, and that one of them threw an hundred
rocks

rocks against him at one throw ; that Jupiter defeated him with thunder, and confined him afterwards under Mount Etna ; and that every time the giant turns himself. Mount Etna belches fire. It is here easy to see that the circumstance of the mountain, that of its being a volcano, suggested the idea of the fable ; and that the fable is made to fit and wind itself up with that circumstance.

The Christian mythologists tell us, that their Satan made war against the Almighty, who defeated him, and confined him afterwards, not under a mountain, but in a pit. It is here easy to see that the first fable suggested the idea of the second ; for the fable of Jupiter and the Giants was told many hundred years before that of Satan.

Thus far the ancient and the Christian mythologists differ very little from each other. But the latter have contrived to carry the matter much farther. They have contrived to connect the fabulous part of the story of Jesus Christ, with the fable originating from Mount Etna ; and in order to make all the parts of the story tie together, they have taken to their aid the traditions of the Jews ; for the Christian mythology is made up partly from the ancient mythology, and partly from the Jewish traditions.

The Christian mythologists, after having confined Satan in a pit, were obliged to let him out again, to bring on the sequel of the fable. He is then introduced into the garden of Eden in the shape of a snake, or a serpent, and in that shape he enters into familiar conversation with Eve, who is no ways surprised to hear a snake talk ; and the issue of this tête-à-tête is, that he persuades her to eat an apple, and the eating of that apple damns all mankind.

After giving Satan this triumph over the whole creation, one would have supposed that the church mythologists would have been kind enough to send him back again to the pit ; or, if they had not done this, that they would have put a mountain upon him (for they say that their faith can remove a mountain), or have put him *under* a mountain, as the former mythologists had done, to prevent his getting again among the women, and doing more mischief. But instead of this, they leave him at large without even obliging him to give his parole. The secret of which is, that they could not do without him : and after being at the trouble of making him, they bribed him to stay. They promised him ALL the Jews, ALL the Turks by anticipation, nine-tenths of the world beside, and Mahomet into the

bargain. After this, who can doubt the bountifulness of the Christian mythology?

Having thus made an insurrection and a battle in heaven, in which none of the combatants could be either killed or wounded—put Satan into the pit—let him out again—given him a triumph over the whole creation—damned all mankind by the eating of an apple, these Christian mythologists bring the two ends of their fable together. They represent this virtuous and amiable man, Jesus Christ, to be at once both God and man, and also the Son of God, celestially begotten on purpose to be sacrificed, because they say that Eve in her longing had eaten an apple.

Putting aside every thing that might excite laughter by its absurdity, or detestation by its profaneness, and confining ourselves merely to an examination of the parts, it is impossible to conceive a story more derogatory to the Almighty, more inconsistent with his wisdom, more contradictory to his power, than this story is.

In order to make for it a foundation to rise upon, the inventors were under the necessity of giving to the being, whom they call Satan, a power equally as great, if not greater, than they attribute to the Almighty. They have not only given him the power of liberating himself from the pit after what they call his fall, but they have made that power increase afterwards to infinity. Before this fall they represent him only as an angel of limited existence, as they represent the rest. After his fall he becomes, by their account, omnipresent. He exists every where, and at the same time. He occupies the whole immensity of space.

Not content with this deification of Satan, they represent him as defeating by stratagem, in the shape of an animal of the creation, all the power and wisdom of the Almighty. They represent him as having compelled the Almighty to the *direct necessity* either of surrendering the whole of the creation to the government and sovereignty of this Satan, or of capitulating for its redemption, by coming down upon earth, and exhibiting himself upon a cross in the shape of a man.

Had the inventors of this story told it the contrary way, that is, had they represented the Almighty as compelling Satan to exhibit *himself* on a cross, in the shape of a snake, as a punishment for his new transgression, the story would have been less absurd, less contradictory. But instead of this, they make the transgressor triumph, and the Almighty fall.

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That many good men have believed this strange fable, and lived very good lives under that belief (for credulity is not a crime) is what I have no doubt of. In the first place, they were educated to believe it, and they would have believed any thing else in the same manner. There are also many who have been so enthusiastically enraptured by what they conceived to be the infinite love of God to man, in making a sacrifice of himself, that the vehemence of the idea has forbidden and deterred them from examining into the absurdity and profaneness of the story. The more unnatural any thing is, the more is it capable of becoming the object of dismal admiration.

But if objects for gratitude and admiration are our desire, do they not present themselves every hour to our eyes? Do we not see a fair creation prepared to receive us the instant we are born—a world furnished to our hands that cost us nothing? Is it we that light up the sun; that pour down the rain; and fill the earth with abundance? Whether we sleep or wake, the vast machinery of the universe still goes on. Are these things, and the blessings they indicate in future, nothing to us? Can our gross feelings be excited by no other subjects than tragedy and suicide? Or is the gloomy pride of man become so intolerable, that nothing can flatter it but a sacrifice of the Creator?

I know that this bold investigation will alarm many, but it would be paying too great a compliment to their credulity to forbear it upon that account. The times and the subject demand it to be done. The suspicion that the theory of what is called the Christian Church is fabulous, is becoming very extensive in all countries; and it will be a consolation to men staggering under that suspicion, and doubting what to believe and what to disbelieve, to see the subject freely investigated. I therefore pass on to an examination of the books called the Old and the New Testament.

These books, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelations (which by the bye is a book of riddles that requires a revelation to explain it) are, we are told, the word of God. It is therefore proper for us to know who told us so, that we may know what credit to give to the report. The answer to this question is, that nobody can tell, except that we tell one another so. The case, however, historically appears to be as follows:

When the church mythologists established their system, they collected all the writings they could find, and managed them

as they pleased. It is a matter altogether of uncertainty to us whether such of the writings as now appear, under the name of the Old and the New Testament, are in the same state in which those collectors say they found them, or whether they added, altered, abridged, or dressed them up.

Be this as it may, they decided by *vote* which of the books out of the collection they had made should be the word of God, and which should not. They rejected several; they voted others to be doubtful, such as the books called the Apocrypha; and those books which had a majority of votes were voted to be the word of God. Had they voted otherwise, all the people, since calling themselves Christians, had believed otherwise; for the belief of the one comes from the vote of the other. Who the people were that did all this, we know nothing of; they called themselves by the general name of the church; and this is all we know of the matter.

As we have no other external evidence or authority for believing those books to be the word of God than what I have mentioned, which is no evidence or authority at all, I come, in the next place, to examine the internal evidence contained in the books themselves.

In the former part of this essay, I have spoken of Revelation. I now proceed further with that subject, for the purpose of applying it to the books in question.

Revelation is a communication of something, which the person to whom that thing is revealed did not know before. For if I have done a thing, or seen it done, it needs no revelation to tell me I have done it, or seen it, nor enable me to tell it, or to write it.

Revelation, therefore, cannot be applied to any thing done upon earth of which man is himself the actor or the witness; and consequently all the historical and anecdotal part of the Bible, which is almost the whole of it, is not within the meaning and compass of the word revelation, and therefore is not the word of God.

When Sampson ran off with the gate-posts of Gaza, if he ever did so (and whether he did or not is nothing to us), or when he visited his Delilah, or caught his foxes, or did any thing else, what has revelation to do with these things? If they were facts, he could tell them himself; or his secretary, if he kept one, could write them, if they were worth either telling or writing; and if they were fictitious, revelation could not make them true; and whether true or not, we are neither the better nor the wiser for knowing them.—When we contem-
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plate the immensity of that Being, who directs and governs the incomprehensible WHOLE, of which the utmost ken of human sight can discover but a part, we ought to feel shame at calling such paltry stories the word of God.

As to the account of the creation, with which the book of Genesis opens, it has all the appearance of being a tradition which the Israelites had among them before they came into Egypt; and after their departure from that country, they put it at the head of their history, without telling, as it is most probable, that they did not know how they came by it. The manner in which the account opens, shews it to be traditional. It begins abruptly. It is nobody that speaks. It is nobody that hears. It is addressed to nobody. It has neither first, second, nor third person. It has every criterion of being a tradition. It has no voucher. Moses does not take it upon himself by introducing it with the formality that he uses on other occasions, such as that of saying, "*the Lord spake unto Moses, saying.*"

Why it has been called the Mosaic account of the creation, I am at a loss to conceive. Moses, I believe, was too good a judge of such subjects to put his name to that account. He had been educated among the Egyptians, who were a people as well skilled in science, and particularly in astronomy, as any people of their day; and the silence and caution that Moses observes, in not authenticating the account, is a good negative evidence that he neither told it nor believed it.—The case is, that every nation of people has been world makers, and the Israelites had as much right to set up the trade of world-making as any of the rest; and as Moses was not an Israelite, he might not choose to contradict the tradition. The account, however, is harmless; and this is more than can be said for many other parts of the Bible.

Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon, than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness, that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and, for my own part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest every thing that is cruel.

We scarcely meet with any thing, a few phrases excepted, but what deserves either our abhorrence or our contempt, till we come to the miscellaneous parts of the Bible. In the anonymous publications, the Psalms and the book of Job,
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more particularly in the latter, we find a great deal of elevated sentiment reverentially expressed of the power and benignity of the Almighty ; but they stand on no higher rank than many other compositions on similar subjects, as well before that time as since.

The Proverbs, which are said to be Solomon's, though most probably a collection (because they discover a knowledge of life, which his situation excluded him from knowing), are an instructive table of ethics. They are inferior in keenness to the proverbs of the Spaniards, and not more wise and economical than those of the American Franklin.

All the remaining parts of the Bible, generally known by the name of the Prophets, are the works of the Jewish poets and itinerant preachers, who mixed poetry, anecdote, and devotion together ; and those works still retain the air and stile of poetry, though in translation.*

There is not, throughout the whole book called the Bible, any word that describes to us what we call a poet, nor any word that describes what we call poetry. The case is, that the word *prophet*, to which latter times have affixed a new idea, was the Bible word for poet, and the word *propheying* meant the art of making poetry. It also meant the art of playing poetry to a tune upon any instrument of music.

* As there are many readers who do not see that a composition is poetry unless it be in rhyme, it is for their information that I add this note.

Poetry consists principally in two things—Imagery and Composition. The composition of poetry differs from that of prose in the manner of mixing long and short syllables together. Take a long syllable out of a line of poetry and put a short one in the room of it, or put a long syllable where a short one should be, and that line will lose its poetical harmony. It will have an effect upon the line like that of misplacing a note in a song.

The imagery in those books called the Prophets, appertains altogether to poetry. It is fictitious, and often extravagant, and not admissible in any other kind of writing than poetry.

To shew that these writings are composed in poetical numbers, I will take ten syllables as they stand in the book, and make a line of the same number of syllables (heroic measure) that shall rhyme with the last word. It will then be seen that the composition of those books is poetical measure. The instance I shall produce is from Isaiah.

“ Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth,”

’Tis God himself that calls attention forth.

Another instance I shall quote is from the mournful Jeremiah, to which I shall add two other lines for the purpose of carrying out the figure, and shewing the intention of the poet.

O! that mine head were waters, and mine eyes
Were fountains, flowing like the liquid skies,
Then would I give the mighty flood release,
And weep a deluge for the human race.

We read of prophesying with pipes, tabrets, and horns—of prophesying with harps, with psalteries, with cymbals, and with every other instrument of music then in fashion. Were we now to speak of prophesying with a fiddle, or with a pipe and tabor, the expression would have no meaning, or would appear ridiculous, and to some people contemptuous, because we have changed the meaning of the word.

We are told of Saul being among the *prophets*, and also that he prophesied; but we are not told what *they prophesied*, nor what *he prophesied*. The case is, there was nothing to tell; for these prophets were a company of musicians and poets, and Saul joined in the concert; and this was called *prophesying*.

The account given of this affair in the book called Samuel, is, that Saul met a *company* of prophets (a whole company of them!) coming down with a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp, and that they prophesied, and that he prophesied with them. But it appears afterwards, that Saul prophesied badly, that is, he performed his part badly; for it is said, that an “*evil spirit from God*† came upon Saul, and he prophesied.”

Now, were there no other passage in the book called the Bible than this, to demonstrate to us that we have lost the original meaning of the word *prophecy*, and substituted another meaning in its place, this alone would be sufficient; for it is impossible to use and apply the word *prophecy* in the place it is here used and applied, if we give to it the sense which latter times have affixed to it. The manner in which it is here used strips it of all religious meaning, and shews that a man might then be a prophet, or might *prophecy*, as he may now be a poet or a musician, without any regard to the morality or the immorality of his character. The word was originally a term of science, promiscuously applied to poetry and to music, and not restricted to any subject upon which poetry and music might be exercised.

Deborah and Barak are called prophets, not because they predicted any thing, but because they composed the poem or song that bears their name, in celebration of an act already done. David was ranked among the prophets, for he was a musician, and was also reputed to be (though perhaps very erroneously) the author of the Psalms. But Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are not called prophets. It does not appear from

† As those men who call themselves divines and commentators are very fond of puzzling one another, I leave them to contest the meaning of the first part of the phrase, that of an *evil spirit of God*. I keep to my text—I keep to the meaning of the word *prophecy*.

any accounts we have, that they could either sing, play music, or make poetry.

We are told of the greater and the lesser prophets. They might as well tell us of the greater and the lesser God; for there cannot be degrees in prophesying consistently with its modern sense. But there are degrees in poetry, and therefore the phrase is reconcilable to the case, when we understand by it the greater and the lesser poets.

It is altogether unnecessary, after this, to offer any observations upon what those men, stiled prophets, have written. The axe goes at once to the root, by shewing that the original meaning of the word has been mistaken, and consequently all the inferences that have been drawn from those books, the devotional respect that has been paid to them, and the laboured commentaries that have been written upon them, under that mistaken meaning, are not worth disputing about.—In many things, however, the writings of the Jewish poets deserve a better fate than that of being bound up, as they now are, with the trash that accompanies them, under the abused name of the word of God.

If we permit ourselves to conceive right ideas of things, we must necessarily affix the idea, not only of unchangeableness, but of the utter impossibility of any change taking place, by any means or accident whatever, in that which we would honour with the name of the word of God: and therefore the word of God cannot exist in any written or human language.

The continually progressive change to which the meaning of words is subject, the want of an universal language which renders translation necessary, the errors to which translations are again subject, the mistakes of copyists and printers, together with the possibility of wilful alteration, are of themselves evidences, that human language, whether in speech or in print, cannot be the vehicle of the word of God.—The word of God exists in something else.

Did the book, called the Bible, excel in purity of ideas and expression, all the books that are now extant in the world, I would not take it for my rule of faith, as being the word of God; because the possibility would nevertheless exist of my being imposed upon. But when I see throughout the greatest part of this book, scarcely any thing but a history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales, I cannot dishonour my Creator by calling it by his name.

Thus much for the Bible; I now go on to the book called the New Testament. The *new* Testament! that is, the *new* will, as if there could be two wills of the Creator.

Had it been the object or the intention of Jesus Christ to establish

bliss a new religion, he would undoubtedly have written the system himself, or *procured it to be written* in his life time. But there is no publication extant authenticated with his name. All the books called the New Testament were written after his death. He was a Jew by birth and by profession; and he was the son of God in like manner that every other person is; for the Creator is the Father of All.

The first four books, called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, do not give a history of the life of Jesus Christ, but only detached anecdotes of him. It appears from these books, that the whole time of his being a preacher was not more than eighteen months; and it was only during this short time, that those men became acquainted with him. They make mention of him, at the age of twelve years, sitting, they say, among the Jewish doctors, asking and answering them questions. As this was several years before their acquaintance with him began, it is most probable they had this anecdote from his parents. From this time there is no account of him for about sixteen years. Where he lived, or how he employed himself during this interval, is not known. Most probably he was working at his father's trade, which was that of a carpenter. It does not appear that he had any school education, and the probability is, that he could not write, for his parents were extremely poor, as appears from their not being able to pay for a bed when he was born.

It is somewhat curious that the three persons, whose names are the most universally recorded, were of very obscure parentage. Moses was a foundling, Jesus Christ was born in a stable, and Mahomet was a mule driver. The first and the last of these men, were founders of different systems of religion; but Jesus Christ founded no new system. He called men to the practice of moral virtues, and the belief of one God. The great trait in his character is philanthropy.

The manner in which he was apprehended shews that he was not much known at that time; and it shews also that the meetings he then held with his followers were in secret; and that he had given over, or suspended, preaching publicly. Judas could no otherways betray him than by giving information where he was, and pointing him out to the officers that went to arrest him; and the reason for employing and paying Judas to do this, could arise only from the cause already mentioned, that of his not being much known, and living concealed.

The idea of his concealment not only agrees very ill with his reputed divinity, but associates with it something of pusillanimity; and his being betrayed, or, in other words, his being apprehended, on the information of one of his followers, shews

that he did not intend to be apprehended, and consequently that he did not intend to be crucified.

The Christian mythologists tell us, that Christ died for the sins of the world, and that he came on *purpose to die*. Would it not then have been the same if he had died of a fever, or of the small-pox, of old age, or of any thing else?

The declaratory sentence which, they say, was passed upon Adam in case he eat of the apple, was not, that *thou shalt surely be crucified*, but *thou shalt surely die*. The sentence was death, and not the *manner of dying*. Crucifixion, therefore, or any other particular manner of dying, made no part of the sentence that Adam was to suffer, and consequently, even upon their own tactics, it could make no part of the sentence that Christ was to suffer in the room of Adam. A fever would have done as well as a cross, if there was any occasion for either.

This sentence of death which, they tell us, was thus passed upon Adam, must either have meant dying naturally, that is, ceasing to live, or have meant what these mythologists call damnation; and consequently the act of dying on the part of Jesus Christ must, according to their system, apply as a prevention to one or other of these two things happening to Adam and to us.

That it does not prevent our dying is evident, because we all die; and if their accounts of longevity be true, men die faster since the crucifixion than before; and with respect to the second explanation, (including with it the *natural death* of Jesus Christ as a substitute for the *eternal death or damnation* of all mankind) it is impertinently representing the Creator as coming off, or revoking the sentence, by a pun or a quibble upon the word *death*. That manufacturer of quibbles, St. Paul, if he wrote the books that bear his name, has helped this quibble on, by making another quibble upon the word *Adam*. He makes there to be two Adams; the one who sins in fact, and suffers by proxy; the other who sins by proxy, and suffers in fact. A religion thus interlarded with quibble, subterfuge, and pun, has a tendency to instruct its professors in the practice of these arts. They acquire the habit without being aware of the cause.

If Jesus Christ was the Being which those mythologists tell us he was, and that he came into this world to *suffer*, which is a word they sometimes use instead of *to die*, the only real suffering he could have endured would have been *to live*. His existence here was a state of exilement or transportation from Heaven, and the way back to his original country was to die.—

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In fine, every thing in this strange system is the reverse of what it pretends to be. It is the reverse of truth; and I become so tired with examining into its inconsistencies and absurdities, that I hasten to the conclusion of it, in order to proceed to something better.

How much, or what parts of the books called the New Testament, were written by the persons whose names they bear, is what we can know nothing of, neither are we certain in what language they were originally written. The matters they now contain may be classed under two heads, anecdote, and epistolary correspondence.

The four books already mentioned, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are altogether anecdotal. They relate events after they had taken place. They tell what Jesus Christ did and said, and what others did and said to him; and in several instances they relate the same event differently. Revelation is necessarily out of the question with respect to those books; not only because the disagreement of the writers, but because revelation cannot be applied to the relating of fact by the persons who saw them done, nor do the relating or recording of any discourse or conversation by those who heard it. The book, called the Acts of the Apostles, an anonymous work, belongs also to the anecdotal part.

All the other parts of the New Testament, except the book of Enigmas, called the Revelations, are a collection of letters under the name of epistles; and the forgery of letters has been such a common practice in the world, that the probability is, at least, equal, whether they are genuine or forged. One thing however, is much less equivocal, which is, that out of the matters contained in those books, together with the assistance of some old stories, the church has set up a system of religion very contradictory to the character of the person whose name it bears. It has set up a religion of pomp and of revenue in pretended imitation of a person, whose life was humility and poverty.

The invention of purgatory, and of the releasing of souls therefrom, by prayers, bought of the church with money; the selling of pardons, dispensations, and indulgences, are revenue laws, without bearing that name or carrying that appearance. But the case nevertheless is, that those things derive their origin from the paroxysm of the crucifixion, and the theory deduced therefrom, which was, that one person could stand in the place of another, and could perform meritorious services for him. The probability therefore is, that the whole theory or doctrine of what is called the redemption (which is said to have been

accomplished by the act of one person in the room of another) was originally fabricated on purpose to bring forward and build all those secondary and pecuniary redemptions upon; and that the passages in the books upon which the idea of theory of redemption is built, have been manufactured and fabricated for that purpose. Why are we to give this church credit, when she tells us that those books are genuine in every part, any more than we give her credit for every thing else she has told us, or for the miracles she says she has performed? That she *could* fabricate writings is certain, because she could write, and the composition of the writings in question is of that kind that any body might do it; and that she *did* fabricate them is not more inconsistent with probability than that she should tell us, as she has done, that she could and did work miracles.

Since then no external evidence can, at this long distance of time, be produced to prove whether the church fabricated the doctrines called redemption or not (for such evidence, whether for or against, would be subject to the same suspicion of being fabricated) the case can only be referred to the internal evidences which the thing carries of itself; and this affords a very strong presumption of its being a fabrication. For the internal evidence is, that the theory or doctrine of redemption has for its basis, an idea of pecuniary justice, and not that of moral justice.

If I owe a person money, and cannot pay him, and he threatens to put me in prison, another person can take the debt upon himself, and pay it for me. But if I have committed a crime, every circumstance of the case is changed. Moral justice cannot take the innocent for the guilty, even if the innocent would offer itself. To suppose justice to do this, is to destroy the principle of its existence, which is the thing itself. It is then no longer justice. It is indiscriminate revenge.

This single reflection will shew that the doctrine of redemption is founded on a mere pecuniary idea, corresponding to that of a debt which another person might pay; and as this pecuniary idea corresponds again with the system of second redemptions obtained through the means of money given to the church for pardons, the probability is, that the same persons fabricated both the one and the other of those theories; and that, in truth, there is no such thing as redemption; that it is fabulous; and that man stands in the same relative condition with his Maker he ever did stand since man existed; and that it is his greatest consolation to think so.

Let him believe this, and he will live more consistently and morally than by any other system. It is by his being taught to
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contemplate himself as an out-law, as an out-cast, as a beggar, as a mumper, as one thrown, as it were, on a dunghill, at an immense distance from his Creator, and who must make his approaches by creeping and cringing to intermediate beings, that he conceives either a contemptuous disregard for every thing under the name of religion, or becomes indifferent, or turns, what he calls, devout. In the latter case, he consumes his life in grief, or the affectation of it. His prayers are reproaches. His humility is ingratitude. He calls himself a worm, and the fertile earth a dunghill; and all the blessings of life by the thankless name of vanities. He despises the choicest gift of God to man, the GIFT OF REASON; and having endeavoured to force upon himself the belief of a system against which reason revolts, he ungratefully calls it *human reason*, as if man could give reason to himself.

Yet with all this strange appearance of humility, and this contempt for human reason, he ventures into the boldest presumptions. He finds fault with every thing. His selfishness is never satisfied: his ingratitude is never at an end. He takes on himself to direct the Almighty what to do, even in the government of the universe. He prays dictatorially. When it is sun-shine, he prays for rain, and when it is rain, he prays for sun-shine. He follows the same idea in every thing that he prays for; for what is the amount of all his prayers, but an attempt to make the Almighty change his mind, and act otherwise than he does. It is as if he were to say—thou knowest not so well as I.

But some perhaps will say, are we to have no word of God—No revelation? I answer yes. There is a word of God; there is a revelation.

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE CREATION WE BEHOLD: And it is in *this word*, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man.

Human language is local and changeable, and is therefore incapable of being used as the means of unchangeable and universal information. The idea that God sent Jesus Christ to publish, as they say, the glad tidings to all nations, from one end of the earth to the other, is consistent only with the ignorance of those who know nothing of the extent of the world, and who believed, as those world-saviours believed, and continued to believe, for several centuries, (and that in contradiction to the discoveries of philosophers, and the experience of navigators) that the earth was flat like a trencher; and that a man might walk to the end of it?

But how was Jesus Christ to make any thing known to all nations? He could speak but one language, which was Hebrew; and

and there are in the world several hundred languages. Scarcely any two nations speak the same language, or understand each other : and as to translations, every man who knows any thing of languages, knows that it is impossible to translate from one language into another, not only without losing a great part of the original, but frequently of mistaking the sense : and besides all this, the art of printing was wholly unknown at the time Christ lived.

It is always necessary that the means that are to accomplish any end, be equal to the accomplishment of that end, or the end cannot be accomplished. It is in this that the difference between finite and infinite power and wisdom discovers itself. Man frequently fails in accomplishing his ends, from a natural inability of the power to the purpose ; and frequently from the want of wisdom to apply power properly. But it is impossible for infinite power and wisdom to fail as man faileth. The means it useth are always equal to the end : but human language, more especially as there is not an universal language, is incapable of being used as an universal means of unchangeable and uniform information ; and therefore it is not the means that God useth in manifesting himself universally to man.

It is only in the CREATION that all our ideas and conceptions of a *word of God* can unite. The creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It is an ever existing original, which every man can read. It cannot be forged ; it cannot be counterfeited ; it cannot be lost ; it cannot be altered ; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not : it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds ; and this *word of God* reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

Do we want to contemplate his power ? We see it in the immensity of the creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom ? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible Whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence ? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy ? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is ? Search not the book called the scripture, which any human hand might make, but the scripture called the Creation.

The only idea man can affix to the name of God, is that of a *first cause*, the cause of all things. And incomprehensibly difficult as it is for a man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it, from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving

disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end ; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time ; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time. In like manner of reasoning, every thing we behold carries in itself the internal evidence that it did not make itself. Every man is an evidence to himself that he did not make himself ; neither could his father make himself, nor his grandfather, nor any of his race ; neither could any tree, plant, or animal, make itself : and it is the conviction arising from this evidence, that carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist, and this first cause man calls God.

It is only by the exercise of reason, that man can discover God. Take away that reason, and he would be incapable of understanding any thing ; and, in this case, it would be just as consistent to read even the book called the Bible, to a horse as to a man. How then is it that those people pretend to reject reason ?

Almost the only parts in the book, called the Bible, that convey to us any idea of God, are some chapters in Job, and the nineteenth psalm. I recollect no other. Those parts are true *deistical* compositions ; for they treat of the *Deity* through his works. They take the book of Creation as the word of God ; they refer to no other book ; and all the inferences they make are drawn from that volume.

I insert, in this place, the nineteenth psalm, as paraphrased into English verse by Addison. I recollect not the prose, and where I write this I have not the opportunity of seeing it.

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land,
The work of an Almighty Hand.
Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wond'rous tale,
And nightly to the list'ning earth
Repeats the story of her birth :
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,

Confirm

Confirm the tidings as they roll,
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.
 What tho' in solemn silence all
 Move round this dark terrestrial ball—
 What tho' no real voice, nor sound,
 Amidst their radiant orbs be found—
 In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
 And utter forth a glorious voice,
 For ever singing as they shine,
 THE HAND THAT MADE US IS DIVINE.

What more does man want to know, than that the hand, or Power that made these things is divine, is omnipotent. Let him believe this, with the force it is impossible to repel if he permits his reason to act, and his rule of moral life will follow of course.

The allusions in Job have all of them the same tendency with this psalm: that of deducing or proving a truth, that would be otherwise unknown, from truths already known.

I recollect not enough of the passages in Job to insert them correctly: but there is one occurs to me that is applicable to the subject I am speaking upon. "Canst thou by searching find out God; canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?"

I know not how the printers have pointed this passage, for I keep no Bible; but it contains two distinct questions that admit of distinct answers.

First, Canst thou by searching find out God? Yes. Because in the first place I know I did not make myself, and yet I have existence; and by *searching* into the nature of other things I find that no other thing could make itself; and yet millions of other things exist; therefore it is that I know, by positive conclusion resulting from this search, that there is a power superior to all those things, and that power is God.

Secondly, Canst thou find out the Almighty to *perfection*? No. Not only because the power and wisdom he has manifested in the structure of the creation that I behold, is to me incomprehensible; but because even this manifestation, great as it is, is probably but a small display of that immensity of power and wisdom, by which millions of other worlds, to me invisible by their distance, were created, and continue to exist.

It is evident that both these questions were put to the reason of the person to whom they are supposed to have been addressed; and it is only by admitting the first question to be answered affirmatively, that the second could follow. It would have been unnecessary, and even absurd, to have put a second question
 more

more difficult than the first, if the first question had been answered negatively. The two questions have different objects; the first refers to the existence of God, the second to his attributes. Reason can discover the one, but it falls infinitely short in discovering the whole of the other.

I recollect not a single passage in all the writings ascribed to the men called apostles, that convey any idea of what God is. Those writings are chiefly controversial; and the gloominess of the subject they dwell upon, that of a man dying in agony on a cross, is better suited to the gloomy genius of a monk in a cell, by whom it is not impossible they were written, than to any man breathing the open air of the creation. The only passage that occurs to me, that has any reference to the works of God, by which only his power and wisdom can be known, is related to have been spoken by Jesus Christ, as a remedy against distrustful care. "Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin." This, however, is far inferior to the allusions in Job, and in the nineteenth psalm; but it is similar in idea, and the modesty of the imagery is correspondent to the modesty of the man.

As to the Christian system of faith, it appears to me as a species of atheism; a sort of religious denial of God. It professes to believe in a man rather than in God. It is a compound made up chiefly of manism with but little deism, and is as near to atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his Maker an opaque body which it calls a redeemer; as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun, and it produces by this means a religious or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orbit of reason into shade.

The effect of this obscurity has been that of turning every thing upside down, and representing it in reverse; and among the revolutions it has thus magically produced it has made a revolution in Theology;

That which is now called natural philosophy, embracing the whole circle of science, of which astronomy occupies the chief place, is the study of the works of God, and of the power and wisdom of God in his works, and is the true theology.

As to the theology that is now studied in its place, it is the study of human opinions and of human fancies *concerning* God. It is not the study of God himself in the works that he has made, but in the works or writings that man has made; and it is not among the least of the mischiefs that the christian system has done to the world, that it has abandoned the original and beautiful system of theology, like a beautiful innocent,

to distress and reproach, to make room for the hag of superstition.

The book of Job, and the 19th Psalm, which even the church admits to be more ancient than the chronological order in which they stand in the book called the Bible, are theological orations conformable to the original system of theology. The internal evidence of those orations proves to a demonstration that the study and contemplation of the works of creation, and of the power and wisdom of God revealed and manifested in those works, made a great part of the religious devotion of the times in which they were written; and it was this devotional study and contemplation that led to the discovery of the principles upon which, what are now called Sciences, are established; and it is to the discovery of these principles that almost all the Arts that contribute to the convenience of human life, owe their existence. Every principal art has some science for its parent, though the person who mechanically performs the work does not always, and but very seldom, perceive the connection.

It is a fraud of the christian system to call the sciences *human invention*; it is only the application of them that is human. Every science has for its basis a system of principles as fixed and unalterable as those by which the universe is regulated and governed. Man cannot make principles: he can only discover them.

For example.—Every person who looks at an almanack sees an account when an eclipse will take place; and he sees also that it never fails to take place according to the account there given. This shews that man is acquainted with the laws by which the heavenly bodies move. But it would be something worse than ignorance, were any church on earth to say, that those laws are an human invention.

It would also be ignorance, or something worse, to say, that the scientific principles, by the aid of which man is enabled to calculate and fore-know when an eclipse will take place, are an human invention. Man cannot invent any thing that is eternal and immutable; and the scientific principles he employs for this purpose must, and are, of necessity, as eternal, and immutable as the laws by which the heavenly bodies move, or they could not be used as they are, to ascertain the time when, and the manner how, an eclipse will take place.

The scientific principles that man employs to obtain the fore-knowledge of an eclipse, or of any thing else relating to the motion of the heavenly bodies, are contained chiefly in that part of science that is called trigonometry, or the properties of a triangle,

triangle, which, when applied to the study of the heavenly bodies is called astronomy; when applied to direct the course of a ship on the ocean, it is called navigation; when applied to the construction of figures drawn by rule and compass, it is called geometry; when applied to the construction of plans of edifices, it is called architecture; when applied to the measurement of any portion of the surface of the earth, it is called land-surveying. In fine, it is the soul of science. It is an eternal truth; it contains the *mathematical demonstration* of which man speaks, and the extent of its uses are unknown.

It may be said, that man can make or draw a triangle, and therefore a triangle is an human invention.

But the triangle when drawn, is no other than the image of the principle: it is a delineation to the eye, and from thence to the mind, of a principle that would otherwise be imperceptible. The triangle does not make the principle, any more than a candle taken into a room that was dark, makes the chairs and tables that before were invisible. All the properties of a triangle exist independently of the figure, and existed before any triangle was drawn or thought of by man. Man had no more to do in the formation of those properties, or principles, than he had to do in making the laws by which the heavenly bodies move: and therefore the one must have the same divine origin as the other.

In the same manner, as it may be said, that man can make a triangle, so also may it be said, he can make the mechanical instrument, called a lever. But the principle by which the lever acts, is a thing distinct from the instrument, and would exist if the instrument did not: it attaches itself to the instrument after it is made; the instrument therefore can act no otherwise than it does act; neither can all the effort of human invention make it act otherwise. That which, in all such cases, man calls the *effect*, is no other than the principle itself rendered perceptible to the senses.

Since then man cannot make principles, from whence did he gain a knowledge of them, so as to be able to apply them, not only to things on earth, but to ascertain the motion of bodies so immensely distant from him as all the heavenly bodies are? From whence, I ask, *could* he gain that knowledge, but from the study of the true theology?

It is the structure of the universe that has taught this knowledge to man. That structure is an ever-existing exhibition of every principle upon which every part of mathematical science is founded. The offspring of this science is mechanics; for mechanics is no other than the principles of science applied

practically. The man who proportions the several parts of a mill, uses the same scientific principles, as if he had the power of constructing an universe: but as he cannot give to matter that invisible agency, by which all the component parts of the immense machine of the universe have influence upon each other, and act in motional unison together without any apparent contract, and to which man has given the name of attraction, gravitation, and repulsion, he supplies the place of that agency by the humble imitation of teeth and cogs. All the parts of man's microcosm must visibly touch. But could he gain a knowledge of that agency, so as to be able to apply it in practice, we might then say, that another *canonical book* of the word of God had been discovered.

If man could alter the properties of the lever, so also could he alter the properties of the triangle; for a lever (taking that sort of lever, which is called a steel-yard, for the sake of explanation) forms, when in motion, a triangle. The line it descends from, (one point of that line being in the fulcrum) the line it descends to, and the chord of the arc, which the end of the lever describes in the air, are the three sides of a triangle. The other arm of the lever describes also a triangle; and the corresponding sides of those two triangles, calculated scientifically, or measured geometrically; and also the sines, tangents, and secants generated from the angles, and geometrically measured, have the same proportions to each other, as the different weights have that will balance each other on the lever, leaving the weight of the lever out of the case.

It may also be said, that man can make a wheel and axis, that he can put wheels of different magnitudes together, and produce a mill. Still the case comes back to the same point, which is, that he did not make the principle that gives the wheels those powers. That principle is as unalterable as in the former cases, or rather it is the same principle under a different appearance to the eye.

The power that two wheels, of different magnitudes, have upon each other, is in the same proportion as if the semi-diameter of the two wheels were joined together and made into that kind of lever I have described, suspended at the part where the semi-diameters join; for the two wheels, scientifically considered, are no other than the two circles generated by the motion of the compound lever.

It is from the study of the true theology that all our knowledge of science is derived, and it is from that knowledge that all the arts have originated.

The

The Almighty lecturer, by displaying the principles of science in the structure of the universe, has invited man to study and to imitation. It is as if he had said to the inhabitants of this globe that we call ours, "I have made an earth for man to dwell upon, and I have rendered the starry heavens visible, to teach him science and the arts. He can now provide for his own comfort, AND LEARN FROM MY MUNIFICENCE TO ALL, TO BE KIND TO EACH OTHER."

Of what use is it, unless it be to teach man something, that his eye is endowed with the power of beholding, to an incomprehensible distance, an immensity of worlds revolving in the ocean of space? Or of what use is it that this immensity of worlds is visible to man? What has man to do with the Pleiades, with Orion, with Sirius, with the star he calls the north star, with the moving orbs he has named Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, if no uses are to follow from their being visible! A less power of vision would have been sufficient for man, if the immensity he now possesses were given only to waste itself, as it were, on an immense desert of space glittering with shows.

It is only by contemplating what he calls the starry heavens, as the book and school of science, that he discovers any use in their being visible to him, or any advantage resulting from his immensity of vision. But when he contemplates the subject in this light, he sees an additional motive for saying that *nothing was made in vain*; for in vain would be this power of vision if it taught man nothing.

As the christian system of faith has made a revolution in theology, so also has it made a revolution in the state of learning. That which is now called learning was not learning originally. Learning does not consist, as the schools now make it consist, in the knowledge of languages, but in the knowledge of things to which language gives names.

The Greeks were a learned people: but learning with them did not consist in speaking Greek, any more than in a Roman's speaking Latin, or a Frenchman's speaking French, or an Englishman's speaking English. From what we know of the Greeks, it does not appear that they knew or studied any language but their own; and this was one cause of their becoming so learned; it afforded them more time to apply themselves to better studies. The schools of the Greeks were schools of science and philosophy, and not of languages: and it is in the knowledge of the things that science and philosophy teach, that learning consists.

Almost all the scientific learning that now exists, came to us from

from the Greeks, or the people who spoke the Greek language. It therefore became necessary to the people of other nations, who spoke a different language, that some among them should learn the Greek language, in order that the learning the Greeks had, might be made known in those nations, by translating the Greek books of science and philosophy into the mother tongue of each nation.

The study therefore of the Greek language, (and in the same manner for the Latin) was no other than the drudgery business of a linguist, and the language thus obtained, was no other than the means, as it were, the tools, employed to obtain the learning the Greeks had. It made no part of the learning itself; and was so distinct from it, as to make it exceeding probable, that the persons who had studied Greek sufficiently to translate those works, such, for instance, as Euclid's Elements, did not understand any of the learning the works contained.

As there is now nothing new to be learned from the dead languages, all the useful books being already translated, the languages are become useless, and the time expended in teaching and in learning them is wasted. So far as the study of languages may contribute to the progress and communication of knowledge (for it has nothing to do with the *creation* of knowledge) it is only in the living languages that new knowledge is to be found: and certain it is, that, in general, a youth will learn more of a living language in one year, than of a dead language in seven; and it is but seldom that the teacher knows much of it himself. The difficulty of learning the dead languages does not arise from any superior abstruseness in the languages themselves, but in their *being dead*, and the pronunciation entirely lost. It would be the same thing with any other language when it becomes dead. The best Greek linguist that now exists does not understand Greek so well as a Grecian plowman did, or a Grecian milkmaid: and the same for the Latin, compared with a plowman or a milkmaid of the Romans; and with respect to pronunciation, and idiom, not so well as the cows that she milked. It would therefore be advantageous to the state of learning to abolish the study of the dead languages, and to make learning consist, as it originally did, in scientific knowledge.

The apology that is sometimes made for continuing to teach the dead languages is, that they are taught at a time when a child is not capable of exerting any other mental faculty than that of memory. But this is altogether erroneous. The human mind has a natural disposition to scientific knowledge, and to the things connected with it. The first and favourite amusement of a child, even before it begins to play, is that of imitating

ing the works of man. It builds houses with cards or sticks; it navigates the little ocean of a bowl of water with a paper boat; or dams the stream of a gutter, and contrives something which it calls a mill; and it interests itself in the fate of its works with a care that resembles affection. It afterwards goes to school, where its genius is killed by the barren study of a dead language, and the philosopher is lost in the linguist.

But the apology that is now made for continuing to teach the dead languages, could not be the cause at first of cutting down learning to the narrow and humble sphere of linguist; the cause, therefore, must be sought for elsewhere. In all researches of this kind, the best evidence that can be produced, is the internal evidence the thing carries with itself, and the evidence of circumstances that unites with it, both of which, in this case are not difficult to be discovered.

Putting then aside, as matter of distinct consideration, the outrage offered to the moral justice of God, by supposing him to make the innocent suffer for the guilty, and also the loose morality and low contrivance of supposing him to change himself into the shape of a man, in order to make an excuse to himself for not executing his supposed sentence upon Adam; putting, I say, those things aside, as matter of distinct consideration, it is certain that what is called the Christian system of faith, including in it the whimsical account of the creation; the strange story of Eve, the snake, and the apple; the amphibious idea of a man-god; the corporeal idea of the death of a god; the mythological idea of a family of gods; and the Christian system of arithmetic, that three are one, and one is three, are all irreconcilable, not only to the divine gift of reason that God hath given to man, but to the knowledge that man gains of the power and wisdom of God, by the aid of the sciences, and by studying the structure of the universe that God has made.

The setter up, therefore, and the advocates of the Christian system of faith, could not but foresee that the continually progressive knowledge that man would gain by the aid of science, of the power and wisdom of God, manifested in the structure of the universe, and in all the works of creation; would militate against, and call into question, the truth of their system of faith; and therefore it became necessary to their purpose to cut learning down to a size less dangerous to their project, and this they effected by restricting the idea of learning to the dead study of dead languages.

They not only rejected the study of science out of the Christian schools, but they persecuted it; and it is only within about the

the last two centuries that the study has been revived. So late as 1610, Galileo, a Florentine, discovered and introduced the use of telescopes, and by applying them to observe the motions and appearances of the heavenly bodies afforded additional means for ascertaining the true structure of the universe. Instead of being esteemed for those discoveries, he was sentenced to renounce them, or the opinions resulting from them, as a damnable heresy. And prior to that time Vigilius was condemned to be burned for asserting the antipodes, or, in other words, that the earth was a globe, and habitable in every part where there was land; yet the truth of this is now too well known even to be told.

If the belief of errors not morally bad did no mischief, it would make no part of the moral duty of man to oppose and remove them. There was no moral ill in believing the earth was flat like a trencher, any more than there was moral virtue in believing it was round like a globe; neither was there any moral ill in believing that the Creator made no other world than this, any more than there was moral virtue in believing that he made millions, and that the infinity of space is filled with worlds. But when a system of religion is made to grow out of a supposed system of creation that is not true; and to unite itself therewith in a manner almost inseparable therefrom, the case assumes an entirely different ground. It is then that errors, not morally bad, become fraught with the same mischiefs as if they were. It is then that the truth, though otherwise indifferent itself, becomes an essential, by becoming the criterion, that either confirms by corresponding evidence, or denies by contradictory evidence, the reality of the religion itself. In this view of the case, it is the moral duty of man to obtain every possible evidence that the structure of the heavens, or any other part of creation affords, with respect to systems of religion. But this the supporters or partizans of the Christian system, as if dreading the result, incessantly opposed, and not only rejected the sciences, but persecuted the professors. Had Newton or Descartes lived three or four hundred years ago, and pursued their studies as they did, it is most probable they would not have lived to finish them; and had Franklin drawn lightning from the clouds at the same time, it would have been at the hazard of expiring for it in flames.

Latter times have laid all the blame upon the Goths and Vandals, but, however unwilling the partizans of the Christian system may be to believe or to acknowledge it, it is nevertheless true, that the age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system. There was more knowledge in the world before that
period

period than for many centuries afterwards; and as to religious knowledge, the Christian system, as already said, was only another species of mythology; and the mythology to which it succeeded was a corruption of an ancient system of theism.*

It is owing to this long interregnum of science, and to no other cause, that we have now to look through a vast chasm of many hundred years to the respectable characters we call the ancients. Had the progression of knowledge gone on proportionably with the stock that before existed, that chasm would have been filled up with characters rising superior in knowledge to each other; and those ancients we now so much admire would have appeared respectably in the back ground of the scene. But the Christian system laid all waste; and if we take our stand about the beginning of the sixteenth century, we look back through that long chasm, to the times of the ancients, as over a vast sandy desert, in which not a shrub appears to intercept the vision to the fertile hills beyond.

It is an inconsistency scarcely possible to be credited, that any thing should exist under the name of a *religion*, that held it to be *irreligious* to study and contemplate the structure of the universe that God had made. But the fact is too well established to be denied. The event that served more than any other to break the first link in this long chain of despotic ignorance, is that known by the name of the reformation by Luther. From that time, though it does not appear to have made any part of the intention of Luther, or of those who are called reformers, the Sciences began to revive, and Liberty,

* It is impossible for us now to know at what time the heathen mythology began: but it is certain, from the internal evidence that it carries, that it did not begin in the same state or condition in which it ended. All the gods of that mythology, except Saturn, were of modern invention. The supposed reign of Saturn was prior to that which is called the heathen mythology, and was so far a species of theism, that it admitted the belief of only one God. Saturn is supposed to have abdicated the government in favour of his three sons and one daughter, Jupiter, Pluto, Neptune, and Juno: after this, thousands of other gods and demi gods were imaginarily created, and the calendar of gods increased as fast as the calendar of saints and the calendar of courts have increased since.

All the corruptions that have taken place in theology, and in religion, have been produced by admitting of what man calls *revealed religion*. The mythologists pretended to more revealed religion than the Christians do. They had their oracles and their priests, who were supposed to receive and deliver the word of God verbally on almost all occasions.

Since then all corruptions drawn from Moloch to modern predestinarianism, and the human sacrifices of the Heathens to the Christian sacrifice of the Creator, have been produced by admitting of what is called *revealed religion*, the most effectual means to prevent all such evils and impositions is, not to admit of any other revelation than that which is manifested in the book of Creation; and to contemplate the Creation as the only true and real word of God that ever did or ever will exist, and that every thing else called the word of God is fable and imposition.

their natural associate, began to appear. This was the only public good the reformation did; for with respect to religious good, it might as well not have taken place. The mythology still continued the same; and a multiplicity of national popes grew out of the downfall of the Pope of Christendom.

Having thus shewn, from the internal evidence of things, the cause that produced a change in the state of learning, and the motive for substituting the study of the dead languages in the place of the sciences, I proceed, in addition to the several observations already made in the former part of this work, to compare, or rather to confront, the evidence that the structure of the universe affords, with the Christian system of religion. But as I cannot begin this part better than by referring to the ideas that occurred to me at an early part of life, and which I doubt not have occurred in some degree to almost every other person at one time or other, I shall state what those ideas were, and add thereto such other matter as shall arise out of the subject, giving to the whole, by way of preface, a short introduction.

My father being of the Quaker profession, it was my good fortune to have an exceeding good moral education, and a tolerable stock of useful learning. Though I went to the grammar school,* I did not learn Latin, not only because I had no inclination to learn languages, but because of the objection the Quakers have against the books in which the language is taught. But this did not prevent me from being acquainted with the subjects of all the Latin books used in the school.

The natural bent of my mind was to science. I had some turn, and I believe some talent, for poetry; but this I rather repressed than encouraged, as leading too much into the field of imagination. As soon as I was able I purchased a pair of globes, and attended the philosophical lectures of Martin and Ferguson, and became afterwards acquainted with Dr. Bevis, of the society called the Royal Society, then living in the Temple, and an excellent astronomer.

I had no disposition for what is called politics. It presented to my mind no other idea than is contained in the word Jockeyship. When, therefore, I turned my thoughts towards matters of government, I had to form a system for myself, that accorded with the moral and philosophic principles in which I had been educated. I saw, or at least I thought I saw, a vast scene opening itself to the world in the affairs of America; and it appeared to me, that unless the Americans changed the plan

* The same school, Thetford in Norfolk, that the present counsellor Mingay went to, and under the same master.

they were then pursuing, with respect to the government of England, and declared themselves independent, they would not only involve themselves in a multiplicity of new difficulties, but shut out the prospect that was then offering itself to mankind through their means. It was from these motives that I published the work known by the name of *Common Sense*, which is the first work I ever did publish: and so far as I can judge of myself, I believe I never should have been known in the world as an author on any subject whatever, had it not been for the affairs of America. I wrote *Common Sense* the latter end of the year 1775, and published it the first of January 1776. Independence was declared the fourth of July following.

Any person who has made observations on the state and progress of the human mind, by observing his own, cannot but have observed, that there are two distinct classes of what are called Thoughts: those that we produce in ourselves by reflection and the act of thinking, and those that bolt into the mind of their own accord. I have always made it a rule to treat those voluntary visitors with civility, taking care to examine, as well as I was able, if they were worth entertaining; and it is from them I have acquired almost all the knowledge that I have. As to the learning that any person gains from school education, it serves only, like a small capital, to put him in the way of beginning learning for himself afterwards. Every person of learning is finally his own teacher; the reason of which is, that principles, being of a distinct quality to circumstances, cannot be impressed upon the memory. Their place of mental residence is the understanding, and they are never so lasting as when they begin by conception. Thus much for the introductory part.

From the time I was capable of conceiving an idea, and acting upon it by reflection, I either doubted the truth of the christian system, or thought it to be a strange affair; I scarcely knew which it was: but I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the church, upon the subject of what is called *Redemption by the death of the Son of God*. After the sermon was ended I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man that killed his son when he could not revenge himself any other way; and as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose

they preached such sermons. This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had any thing in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection arising from the idea I had, that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner to this moment; and I moreover believe, that any system of religion that has any thing in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system.

It seems as if parents of the Christian profession were ashamed to tell their children any thing about the principles of their religion. They sometimes instruct them in morals, and talk to them of the goodness of what they call Providence; for the christian mythology has five deities: there is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, the God Providence, and the Goddess Nature. But the christian story of God the Father putting his son to death, or employing people to do it (for that is the plain language of the story) cannot be told by a parent to a child: and to tell him that it was done to make mankind happier and better is making the story still worse, as if mankind could be improved by the example of murder: and to tell him that all this is a mystery, is only making an excuse for the incredibility of it.

How different is this to the pure and simple profession of Deism! The true deist has but one Deity; and his religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom, and benignity of the Deity in his works, and in endeavouring to imitate him in every thing moral, scientific, and mechanical.

The religion that approaches the nearest of all others to true deism, in the moral and benign part thereof, is that professed by the Quakers; but they have contracted themselves too much by leaving the works of God out of their system. Though I reverence their philanthropy, I cannot help smiling at the conceit, that if the taste of a Quaker could have been consulted at the creation, what a silent and drab-coloured creation it would have been! Not a flower would have blossomed its gaities, nor a bird been permitted to sing.

Quitting these reflections, I proceed to other matters. After I had made myself master of the use of the globes, and of the orrery,* and conceived an idea of the infinity of space, and the eternal

* As this book may fall into the hands of persons who do not know what an orrery is; it is for their information I add this note, as the name gives no idea of the uses of the thing. The orrery has its name from the person who invented it. It is a machinery of clock-work representing the universe in miniature; and in which the revolution of the earth round itself and round the sun, the revolution of the moon round the earth, the revolution of the planets round the sun,

eternal divisibility of matter, and obtained, at least, a general knowledge of what is called natural philosophy, I began to compare, or, as I have before said, to confront, the eternal evidence those things afford with the Christian system of faith.

Though it is not a direct article of the Christian system that this world that we inhabit is the whole of the habitable creation, yet it is so worked up therewith, from what is called the Mosaic account of the creation, the story of Eve and the apple, and the counterpart of that story, the death of the Son of God, that to believe otherwise, that is, to believe that God created a plurality of worlds, at least as numerous as what we call stars, renders the Christian system of faith at once little and ridiculous, and scatters it in the mind like feathers in the air. The two beliefs cannot be held together in the same mind; and he who thinks that he believes both, has thought but little of either.

Though the belief of a plurality of worlds was familiar to the ancients, it is only within the last three centuries that the extent and dimensions of this globe that we inhabit have been ascertained. Several vessels, following the tract of the ocean, have sailed entirely round the world, as a man may march in a circle, and come round by the contrary side of the circle to the spot he set out from. The circular dimensions of our world in the widest part, as a man would measure the widest round of an apple or a ball, is only twenty-five thousand and twenty English miles, reckoning sixty-nine miles and an half to an equatorial degree, and may be sailed round in the space of about three years.*

A world of this extent may, at first thought, appear to us to be great; but if we compare it with the immensity of space in which it is suspended, like a bubble or balloon in the air, it is infinitely less in proportion than the smallest grain of sand is to the size of the world, or the finest particle of dew to the whole ocean, and is therefore but small; and, as will be hereafter shewn, is only one of a system of worlds of which the universal creation is composed.

It is not difficult to gain some faint idea of the immensity of space in which this and all the other worlds are suspended, if

sun, their relative distances from the sun, as the centre of the whole system, their relative distances from each other, and their different magnitudes, are represented as they really exist in what we call the heavens.

* Allowing a ship to sail, on an average, three miles in an hour, she would sail entirely round the world in less than one year, if she could sail in a direct circle; but she is obliged to follow the course of the ocean.

we follow a progression of ideas. When we think of the size or dimensions of a room, our ideas limit themselves to the walls, and there they stop. But when our eye, or our imagination, darts into space, that is, when it looks upward into what we call the open air, we cannot conceive any walls or boundaries it can have; and if, for the sake of resting our ideas, we suppose a boundary, the question immediately renews itself, and asks, what is beyond that boundary? and in the same manner, what is beyond the next boundary? and so on, till the fatigued imagination returns and says, *there is no end*. Certainly, then, the Creator was not pent for room when he made this world no larger than it is; and we have to seek the reason in something else.

If we take a survey of our own world, or rather of this, of which the Creator has given us the use, as our portion in the immense system of creation, we find every part of it, the earth, the waters, and the air that surrounds it, filled, and, as it were, crowded with life, down from the largest animals that we know of, to the smallest insects the naked eye can behold, and from thence to others still smaller, and totally invisible without the assistance of the microscope. Every tree, every plant, every leaf, serve not only as an habitation, but as a world to some numerous race, till animal existence becomes so exceedingly refined, that the effluvia of a blade of grass would be food for thousands.

Since then no part of our earth is left unoccupied, why is it to be supposed that the immensity of space is a naked void, lying in eternal waste? There is room for millions of worlds as large or larger than ours, and each of them millions of miles apart from each other.

Having now arrived at this point, if we carry our ideas only one thought further, we shall see, perhaps, the true reason, at least a very good reason for our happiness, why the Creator, instead of making one immense world, extending over an immense quantity of space, has preferred dividing that quantity of matter into several distinct and separate worlds, which we call planets, of which our earth is one. But before I explain my ideas upon this subject, it is necessary (not for the sake of those that already know, but for those who do not) to shew what the system of the universe is.

That part of the universe that is called the solar system (meaning the system of worlds to which our earth belongs, and of which Sol, or in English language the Sun, is the centre) consists, besides the sun, of six distinct orbs, or planets, or
worlds,

worlds, besides the secondary bodies called the satellites, or moons, of which our earth has one that attends her in her annual revolution round the sun, in like manner as the other satellites, or moons, attend the planets, or worlds, to which they severally belong, as may be seen by the assistance of the telescope.

The sun is the centre round which those six worlds, or planets, revolve at different distances therefrom, and in circles concentric to each other. Each world keeps constantly in nearly the same tract round the sun, and continues, at the same time, turning round itself, in nearly an upright position, as a top turns round itself when it is spinning on the ground, and leans a little sideways.

It is this leaning of the earth ($23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees) that occasions summer and winter, and the different length of days and nights. If the earth turned round itself in a position perpendicular to the plane or level of the circle it moves in around the sun, as a top turns round when it stands erect on the ground, the days and nights would be always of the same length, twelve hours day, and twelve hours night, and the season would be uniformly the same throughout the year.

Every time that a planet (our earth for example) turns round itself, it makes what we call day and night; and every time it goes entirely round the sun, it makes what we call a year; consequently our world turns three hundred and sixty-five times round itself, in going once round the sun.*

The names that the ancients gave to those six worlds, and which are still called by the same names, are Mercury, Venus, this world that we call ours, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. They appear larger to the eye than the stars, being many million miles nearer to our earth than any of the stars are. The planet Venus is that which is called the evening star, and sometimes the morning star, as she happens to set after, or rise before, the sun, which, in either case, is never more than three hours.

The sun, as before said, being the centre, the planet, or world, nearest the sun, is Mercury; his distance from the sun is thirty-four million miles, and he moves round in a circle always at that distance from the sun, as a top may be supposed to spin round in the tract in which a horse goes in a mill.

* Those who supposed that the sun went round the earth every twenty-four hours, made the same mistake in idea, that a cook would do in fact, that should make the fire go round the meat, instead of the meat turning round itself towards the fire.

The second world is Venus; she is fifty-seven million miles distant from the sun, and consequently moves round in a circle much greater than that of Mercury. The third world is this that we inhabit, and which is eighty-eight million miles distant from the sun, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of Venus. The fourth world is Mars; he is distant from the sun one hundred and thirty-four million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of our earth. The fifth is Jupiter; he is distant from the sun five hundred and fifty-seven million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of Mars. The sixth world is Saturn, he is distant from the sun seven hundred and sixty-three million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle that surrounds the circles or orbits of all the other worlds or planets.

The space, therefore, in the air, or in the immensity of space, that our solar system takes up for the several worlds to perform their revolutions in round the sun, is of the extent in a strait line of the whole diameter of the orbit or circle in which Saturn moves round the sun, which being double his distance from the sun, is fifteen hundred and twenty-six million miles: and its circular extent is nearly five thousand million; and its globical contents is almost three thousand five hundred million times three thousand five hundred million square miles.*

But this, immense as it is, is only one system of worlds. Beyond this, at a vast distance into space, far beyond all power of calculation, are the stars called the fixed stars. They are called fixed, because they have no revolutionary motion as the six worlds or planets have that I have been describing. Those fixed stars continue always at the same distance from each other, and always in the same place, as the sun does in the

* If it should be asked, how can man know these things? I have one plain answer to give, which is, that man knows how to calculate an eclipse, and also how to calculate, to a minute of time, when the planet Venus, in making her revolutions round the sun, will come in a strait line between our earth and the sun, and will appear to us about the size of a large pea passing across the face of the sun. This happens but twice in about an hundred years, at the distance of about eight years from each other, and has happened twice in our time, both of which were foreknown by calculation. It can also be known when they will happen again for a thousand years to come, or to any other portion of time. As, therefore, man could not be able to do those things if he did not understand the solar system, and the manner in which the revolutions of the several planets, or worlds are performed, the fact of calculating an eclipse, or a transit of Venus, is a proof in point that the knowledge exists; and as to a few thousand, or even a few million miles, more or less, it makes scarcely any sensible difference in such immense distances.

centre of our system. The probability therefore is, that each of those fixed stars is also a sun, round which another system of worlds or planets, though too remote for us to discover, performs its revolutions, as our system of worlds does round our central sun.

By this easy progression of ideas, the immensity of space will appear to us to be filled with systems of worlds; and that no part of space lies at waste, any more than any part of the globe of earth and water is left unoccupied.

Having thus endeavoured to convey, in a familiar and easy manner, some idea of the structure of the universe, I return to explain what I before alluded to, namely, the great benefits arising to man in consequence of the Creator having made a plurality of worlds, such as our system is, consisting of a central sun and six worlds, besides satellites, in preference to that of creating one world only of a vast extent.

It is an idea I have never lost sight of, that all our knowledge of science is derived from the revolutions (exhibited to our eye, and from thence to our understanding) which those several planets or worlds, of which our system is composed, make in their circuit round the sun.

Had then the quantity of matter which these six worlds contain been blended into one solitary globe, the consequence to us would have been, that either no revolutionary motion would have existed, or not a sufficiency of it to give us the idea and the knowledge of science we now have; and it is from the sciences that all the mechanical arts that contribute so much to our earthly felicity and comfort are derived.

As therefore the Creator made nothing in vain, so also must it be believed that he organized the structure of the universe in the most advantageous manner for the benefit of man: and as we see, and from experience feel, the benefits we derive from the structure of the universe, formed as it is, which benefits we should not have had the opportunity of enjoying if the structure, so far as relates to our system, had been a solitary globe, we can discover at least one reason why a plurality of worlds has been made, and that reason calls forth the devotional gratitude of man, as well as his admiration.

But it is not to us, the inhabitants of this globe, only, that the benefits arising from a plurality of worlds are limited. The inhabitants of each of the worlds of which our system is composed enjoy the same opportunities of knowledge as we do. They behold the revolutionary motions of our earth as we behold theirs. All the planets revolve in sight of each other

other ; and therefore the same universal school of science presents itself to all.

Neither does the knowledge stop here. The system of worlds next to us exhibits in its revolutions the same principles and school of science, to the inhabitant of their system, as our system does to us, and in like manner throughout the immensity of space.

Our ideas, not only of the almightiness of the Creator, but of his wisdom and his beneficence, become enlarged in proportion as we contemplate the extent and the structure of the universe. The solitary idea of a solitary world rolling, or at rest, in the immense ocean of space, gives place to the cheerful idea of a society of worlds, so happily contrived as to administer, even by their motion, instruction to man. We see our own earth filled with abundance, but we forget to consider how much of that abundance is owing to the scientific knowledge the vast machinery of the universe has unfolded.

But, in the midst of those reflections, what are we to think of the Christian system of faith, that forms itself upon the idea of only one world, and that of no greater extent, as is before shewn, than twenty-five thousand miles. An extent, which a man walking at the rate of three miles an hour, for twelve hours in the day, could he keep on in a circular direction, would walk entirely round in less than two years. Alas ! what is this to the mighty ocean of space, and the almighty power of the Creator !

From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because, they say, one man and one woman had eaten an apple. And, on the other hand, are we to suppose that every world in the boundless creation, had an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a redeemer ? In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life.

It has been by rejecting the evidence that the word, or works of God in the creation, affords to our senses, and the action of our reason upon that evidence, that so many wild and whimsical systems of faith, and of religion, have been fabricated and set up. There may be many systems of religion, that so far from being morally bad, are in many respects morally good : but there can be but **ONE** that is true ; and that
one

one necessarily must, as it ever will, be in all things consistent with the ever-existing word of God, that we behold in his works. But such is the strange construction of the Christian system of faith, that every evidence the heavens afford to man, either directly contradicts it or renders it absurd.

It is possible to believe, and I always feel pleasure in encouraging myself to believe it, that there have been men in the world who persuade themselves that, what is called a *pious fraud*, might, at least, under particular circumstances, be productive of some good. But the fraud being once established, could not afterwards be explained; for it is with a pious fraud as with a bad action, it begets a calamitous necessity of going on.

The persons who first preached the Christian system of faith, and in some measure combined it with the morality preached by Jesus Christ, might persuade themselves that it was better than the heathen mythology that then prevailed. From the first preachers, the fraud went on to the second, and to the third, till the idea of its being a pious fraud became lost in the belief of its being true; and that belief came again encouraged by the interest of those who made a livelihood by preaching it.

But though such a belief might, by such means, be rendered almost general among the laity, it is next to impossible to account for the continual persecution carried on by the church, for several hundred years, against the sciences and against the professors of science, if the church had not some record or some tradition, that it was originally no other than a pious fraud, or did not foresee, that it could not be maintained against the evidence that the structure of the universe afforded.

Having thus shewn the irreconcilable inconsistencies between the real word of God, existing in the universe, and that which is called *the word of God*, as shewn to us in a printed book, that any man might make, I proceed to speak of the three principal means that have been employed in all ages, and perhaps in all countries, to impose upon mankind.

Those three means are Mystery, Miracle, and Prophecy. The two first are incompatible with true religion, and the third ought always to be suspected.

With respect to mystery, every thing we behold is, in one sense, a mystery to us. Our own existence is a mystery: the whole vegetable world is a mystery. We cannot account how it is that an acorn, when put into the ground, is made to develop itself, and become an oak. We know not how it is

that the seed we sow unfolds and multiplies itself, and returns to us such an abundant interest for so small a capital.

The fact, however, as distinct from the operating cause, is not a mystery because we see it; and we know also the means we are to use, which is no other than putting the seed in the ground. We know therefore as much as is necessary for us to know; and that part of the operation that we do not know, and which if we did, we could not perform, the Creator takes upon himself, and performs it for us. We are therefore better off than if we had been let into the secret, and left to do it for ourselves.

But though every created thing is in this sense a mystery, the word mystery cannot be applied to *moral truth* any more than obscurity can be applied to light. The God in whom we believe is a God of moral truth, and not a God of mystery or obscurity. Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is a fog of human invention, that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion. Truth never envelopes *itself* in mystery; and the mystery in which it is at any time enveloped, is the work of its antagonist, and never of itself.

Religion, therefore, being the belief of a God, and the practice of moral truth, cannot have connection with mystery. The belief of a God, so far from having any thing of mystery in it, is of all beliefs the most easy, because it arises to us, as is before observed, out of necessity. And the practice of moral truth, or in other words a practical imitation of the moral goodness of God, is no other than our acting towards each other as he acts benignly towards all. We cannot *serve* God in the manner we serve those who cannot do without such service; and therefore the only idea we can have of serving God, is that of contributing to the happiness of the living creation that God has made. This cannot be done by retiring ourselves from the society of the world, and spending a reclusive life in selfish devotion.

The very nature and design of religion, if I may so express it, prove even to demonstration, that it must be free from every thing of mystery, and unincumbered with every thing that is mysterious. Religion, considered as a duty, is incumbent upon every living soul alike, and therefore must be on a level to the understanding and comprehension of all. Man does not learn religion as he learns the secrets and mysteries of a trade. He learns the theory of religion by reflection. It arises out of the action of his own mind upon the things which he sees, or
upon

upon what he may happen to hear or to read, and the practice joins itself thereto.

When men, whether from policy or pious fraud, set up systems of religion incompatible with the word or works of God in the creation, and not only above, but repugnant to human comprehension, they were under the necessity of inventing or adopting a word that should serve as a bar to all questions, inquiries, and speculations. The word *mystery* answered this purpose; and thus it has happened, that religion, which in itself is without mystery, has been corrupted into a fog of mysteries.

As *mystery* answered all general purposes, *miracle* followed as an occasional auxiliary. The former served to bewilder the mind, the latter to puzzle the senses. The one was the lingo, the other the legerdemain.

But before going further into this subject, it will be proper to inquire what is to be understood by a miracle.

In the same sense that every thing may be said to be a mystery, so also may it be said, that every thing is a miracle, and that no one thing is a greater miracle than another. The elephant, though larger, is not a greater miracle than a mite: nor a mountain a greater miracle than an atom. To an Almighty power it is no more difficult to make the one than the other; and no more difficult to make a million of worlds than to make one. Every thing therefore is a miracle in one sense; whilst, in the other sense, there is no such thing as a miracle. It is a miracle when compared to our power, and to our comprehension. It is not a miracle compared to the power that performs it. But as nothing in this description conveys the idea that is affixed to the word miracle, it is necessary to carry the inquiry further.

Mankind have conceived to themselves certain laws by which, what they call Nature, is supposed to act; and that a miracle is something contrary to the operation and effect of those laws. But unless we know the whole extent of those laws, and of what are commonly called the powers of nature, we are not able to judge whether any thing that may appear to us wonderful, or miraculous, be within, or be beyond, or be contrary to, her natural power of acting.

The ascension of a man several miles high into the air would have every thing in it that constitutes the idea of a miracle, if it were not known that a species of air can be generated several times lighter than the common atmospheric air, and yet possesses elasticity enough to prevent the balloon, in which that
light

light air is inclosed, from being compressed into as many times less bulk, by the common air that surrounds it. In like manner, extracting flashes or sparks of fire from the human body, as visible as from a steel struck with a flint, and causing iron or steel to move without any visible agent, would also give the idea of a miracle, if we were not acquainted with electricity and magnetism: so also would many other experiments in natural philosophy, to those who are not acquainted with the subject. The restoring persons to life, who are to appearance dead, as is practised upon drowned persons, would also be a miracle, if it were not known that animation is capable of being suspended, without being extinct.

Besides these, there are performances by slight of hand, and by persons acting in concert, that have a miraculous appearance, which, when known, are thought nothing of. And besides these, there are mechanical and optical deceptions. There is now an exhibition in Paris of ghosts or spectres, which, though it is not imposed upon the spectators as a fact, has an astonishing appearance. As therefore we know not the extent to which either nature or art can go, there is no positive criterion to determine what a miracle is; and mankind, in giving credit to appearances, under the idea of their being miracles, are subject to be continually imposed upon.

Since then appearances are so capable of deceiving, and things not real have a strong resemblance to things that are, nothing can be more inconsistent, than to suppose, that the Almighty would make use of means, such as are called miracles, that would subject the person who performed them to the suspicion of being an impostor, and the person who related them to be suspected of lying, and the doctrine intended to be supported thereby, to be suspected as a fabulous invention.

Of all the modes of evidence that ever were invented to obtain belief to any system or opinion, to which the name of religion has been given, that of *miracle*, however successful the imposition may have been, is the most inconsistent. For, in the first place, whenever recourse is had to show, for the purpose of procuring that belief (for a miracle, under any idea of the word, is a show) it implies a lameness or weakness in the doctrine that is preached. And, in the second place, it is degrading the Almighty into the character of a show-man, playing tricks to amuse and make the people stare and wonder. It is also the most equivocal sort of evidence that can be set up; for the belief is not to depend upon the thing called a miracle, but upon the credit of the reporter, who says that he saw it; and

and therefore the thing, were it true, would have no better chance of being believed than if it were a lie.

Suppose I were to say, that when I sat down to write this book, a hand presented itself in the air, took up the pen, and wrote every word that is herein written; would any body believe me? Certainly they would not. Would they believe me a whit the more if the thing had been a fact? Certainly they would not. Since then a real miracle, were it to happen, would be subject to the same fate as the falsehood, the inconsistency becomes the greater, of supposing the Almighty would make use of means that would not answer the purpose for which they were intended, even if they were real.

If we are to suppose a miracle to be something so entirely out of the course of what is called nature, that she must go out of that course to accomplish it, and we see an account given of such miracle by the person who said he saw it, it raises a question in the mind very easily decided, which is, Is it more probable that nature should go out of her course, or that a man should tell a lie? We have never seen, in our time, nature go out of her course, but we have good reason to believe that millions of lies have been told in the same time; it is therefore at least, millions to one that the reporter of a miracle tells a lie.

The story of the whale swallowing Jonah, though a whale is large enough to do it, borders greatly on the marvellous; but it would have approached nearer to the idea of a miracle if Jonah had swallowed the whale. In this, which may serve for all cases of miracles, the matter would decide itself as before stated, namely, Is it more probable that a man should have swallowed a whale or told a lie?

But supposing that Jonah had really swallowed the whale, and gone with it in his belly to Nineveh, and to convince the people that it was true, have cast it up in their sight of the full length and size of a whale, would they not have believed him to have been the devil instead of a prophet; or, if the whale had carried Jonah to Nineveh, and cast him up in the same public manner, would they not have believed the whale to have been the devil, and Jonah one of his imps?

The most extraordinary of all the things called miracles, related in the New Testament, is that of the devil flying away with Jesus Christ, and carrying him to the top of a high mountain, and to the top of the highest pinnacle of the temple, and shewing him, and promising to him, *all the kingdoms of the world*. How happened it that he did not discover America;

or is it only with *kingdoms* that his footy highness has any interest?

I have too much respect for the moral character of Christ, to believe that he told this whale of a miracle himself; neither is it easy to account for what purpose it could have been fabricated, unless it were to impose upon the connoisseurs of miracles, as is sometimes practised upon the connoisseurs of Queen Anne's farthings, and collectors of relics and antiquities, or to render the belief of miracles ridiculous, by 'outdoing' miracle, as Don Quixote outdid chivalry; or to embarrass the belief of miracles, by making it doubtful by what power, whether of God or of the devil, any thing called a miracle was performed. It requires, however, a great deal of faith in the devil to believe this miracle.

In every point of view in which those things called miracles can be placed and considered, the reality of them is improbable, and their existence unnecessary. They would not, as before observed, answer any useful purpose, even if they were true: for it is more difficult to obtain belief to a miracle than to a principle evidently moral without any miracle. Moral principle speaks universally for itself. Miracle could be but a thing of the moment, and seen but by a few; after this it requires a transfer of faith from God to man, to believe a miracle upon man's report. Instead therefore of admitting the recitals of miracles as evidence of any system of religion being true, they ought to be considered as symptoms of its being fabulous. It is necessary to the full and upright character of truth, that it rejects the crutch; and it is consistent with the character of fable, to seek the aid that truth rejects. Thus much for mystery and miracle.

As mystery and miracle took charge of the past and the present, prophecy took charge of the future, and rounded the tenses of faith. It was not sufficient to know what had been done, but what would be done. The supposed prophet was the supposed historian of times to come: and if he happened, in shooting with a long bow of a thousand years, to strike within a thousand miles of a mark, the ingenuity of posterity could make it point-blank: and if he happened to be directly wrong, it was only to suppose, as in the case of Jonah and Nineveh, that God had repented himself, and changed his mind. What a fool do fabulous systems make of man!

It has been shewn in a former part of this work, that the original meaning of the words prophet and prophesying has been changed, and that a prophet, in the sense the word is now used,

used, is a creature of modern invention; and it is owing to this change in the meaning of the words, that the flights and metaphors of the Jewish poets, and phrases and expressions now rendered obscure by our not being acquainted with the local circumstances to which they applied at the time they were used, have been erected into prophecies, and made to bend to explanations at the will and whimsical conceits of sectaries, expounders, and commentators. Every thing unintelligible was prophetic; and every thing insignificant, was typical. A blunder would have served for a prophecy, and a dish-clout for a type.

If by a prophet we are to suppose a man, to whom the Almighty communicated some event that would take place in future, either there were such men, or there were not. If there were, it is consistent to believe that the event, so communicated, would be told in terms that could be understood; and not related in such a loose and obscure manner as to be out of the comprehension of those that heard it, and so equivocal as to fit almost any circumstance that might happen afterwards. It is conceiving very irreverently of the Almighty to suppose he would deal in this jesting manner with mankind: yet all the things called prophecies, in the book called the Bible, come under this description.

But it is with prophecy as it is with miracle. It could not answer the purpose even if it were real. Those to whom a prophecy should be told, could not tell whether the man prophesied or lied, or whether it had been revealed to him, or whether he conceited it: and if the thing that he prophesied, or pretended to prophesy, should happen, or something like it, among the multitude of things that are daily happening, nobody could again know whether he foreknew it, or guessed at it, or whether it was accidental. A prophet, therefore, is a character useless and unnecessary; and the safe side of the case is, to guard against being imposed upon, by not giving credit to such relations.

Upon the whole, mystery, miracle, and prophecy, are appendages that belong to fabulous, and not to true, religion. They are the means by which so many *Lo heres!* and *Lo theres!* have been spread about the world, and religion been made into a trade. The success of one impostor gave encouragement to another; and the quieting salvo of doing *some good*, by keeping up a *pious fraud*, protected them from remorse.

Having now extended the subject to a greater length than I first intended, I shall bring it to a close, by abstracting a summary from the whole.

First. That the idea or belief of a word of God existing in print, or in writing, or in speech, is inconsistent in itself for the reasons already assigned. These reasons, among many others, are the want of an universal language; the mutability of language; the errors to which translations are subject; the possibility of totally suppressing such a word; the probability of altering it, or of fabricating the whole, and imposing it upon the world.

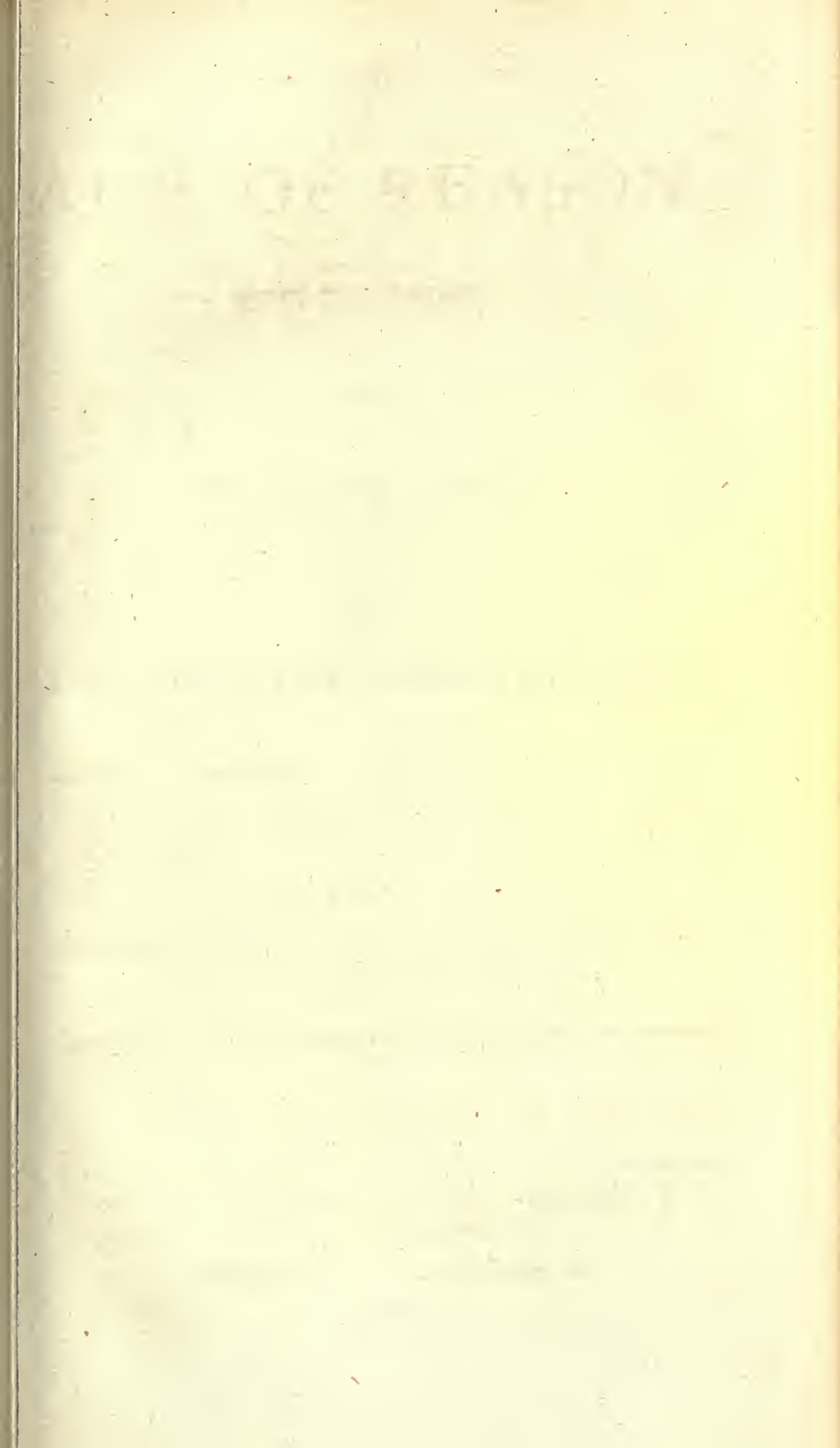
Secondly. That the creation we behold is the real and ever-existing word of God, in which we cannot be deceived. It proclaimeth his power, it demonstrates his wisdom, it manifests his goodness and beneficence.

Thirdly. That the moral duty of man consists in imitating the moral goodness and beneficence of God, manifested in the creation, towards all his creatures. That seeing as we daily do the goodness of God to all men, it is an example calling upon all men to practise the same towards each other; and consequently that every thing of persecution and revenge between man and man, and every thing of cruelty to animals, is a violation of moral duty.

I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing, even to positive conviction, that the power that gave me existence is able to continue it, in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears more probable to me that I shall continue to exist hereafter, than that I should have had existence, as I now have, before that existence began.

It is certain that, in one point, all nations of the earth and all religions agree. All believe in a God. The things in which they disagree, are the redundancies annexed to that belief; and therefore, if ever an universal religion should prevail, it will not be believing any thing new, but in getting rid of redundancies, and believing as man believed at first. Adam, if ever there was such a man, was created a Deist;—but in the mean time let every man follow, as he has a right to do, the religion and the worship he prefers.

THE END.



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AGE OF REASON.

Part the Second.

BEING

AN INVESTIGATION

OF

TRUE AND FABULOUS THEOLOGY:

By THOMAS PAINE,

Author of the Works intituled,

COMMON SENSE—RIGHTS OF MAN, PART FIRST AND SECOND—AND DISSERTATIONS ON FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT.

L O N D O N:

Printed for and sold by DANIEL ISAAC EATON, Printer and Bookseller to the Supreme Majesty of the People, at the Cock and Swine, No. 74, Newgate-Street.

PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.



1796.

S I R,

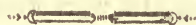
I HAVE seen advertised in the London papers, the second edition of the Age of Reason, printed, the Advertisement says, from the Author's Manuscript, and entered at Stationers Hall.—I have never sent any manuscript to any person.—It is therefore a forgery to say it is printed from the Author's Manuscript, and, I suppose is done to give the Publisher a pretence of Copy-Right, which he has no title to.

I send you a printed Copy, which is the only one I have sent to London.—I wish you to make a cheap edition of it.—I know not by what means any copy has got over to London.—If any person has made a Manuscript Copy, I can have no doubt but it is full of errors.—I wish you would talk with Mr.—— upon this subject, as I wish to know by what means this trick has been played, and from whom the publisher has got possession of any copy.

Paris, December 4, 1795.

T. PAINE:

P R E F A C E.



I HAVE mentioned in the former part of *The Age of Reason*, that it had long been my intention to publish my thoughts upon Religion; but that I had originally reserved it to a later period in life, intending it to be the last work I should undertake. The circumstances, however, that existed in France in the latter end of the year 1793, determined me to delay it no longer. The just and humane principles of the revolution, which philosophy had first diffused, had been departed from. The Idea, always dangerous to Society as it is derogatory to the Almighty—that priests could forgive sins—though it seemed to exist no longer, had blunted the feelings of humanity, and callously prepared men for the commission of all crimes. The intolerant spirit of church persecution had transferred itself into politics; the tribunals, styled Revolutionary, supplied the place of an inquisition; and the Guillotine of the Stake. I saw many of my most intimate friends destroyed; others daily carried to prison; and I had reason to

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believe,

believe, and had also intimations given me, that the same danger was approaching myself.

Under these disadvantages, I began the former part of the Age of Reason; I had, besides, neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both; nor could I procure any; notwithstanding which, I have produced a work that no Bible Believer, though writing at his ease, and with a Library of Church books about him can refute. Towards the latter end of December of that year, a motion was made and carried, to exclude foreigners from the Convention. There were but two, Anacharsis Cloots and myself, and I saw I was particularly pointed at by Bourdon de l'Oise, in his speech on that motion.

Conceiving, after this, that I had but a few days of liberty, I sat down, and brought the work to a close as speedily as possible; and I had not finished it more than six hours, in the state it has since appeared, before a guard came about three in the morning, with an order, signed by the two Committees of Public Safety and Surety General, for putting me in arrestation as a foreigner, and conveying me to the prison of the Luxembourg. I contrived, in my way there, to call on Joel Barlow, and I put the Manuscript of the work into his hands, as more safe than in my possession in prison; and not knowing what might be the fate in France, either of the writer or the work, I addressed it to the protection of the citizens of the United States.

It is justice that I say, that the guard who executed this order, and the interpreter to the Committee of General Surety, who accompanied them to examine my papers, treated me not only with civility, but with respect. The keeper of the Luxembourg, Benoit, a man of a good heart, shewed to me every friendship in his power, as did also all his family, while he continued in that station. He was removed from it, put into arrestation, and carried before the tribunal upon a malignant accusation, but acquitted.

After I had been in the Luxembourg about three weeks, the Americans, then in Paris, went in a body to the Convention, to reclaim me as their countryman and friend; but were answered by the President, Vadier, who was also President of the Committee of Surety General, and had signed the order for my arrestation, that I was born in England. I heard no more after this, from any person out of the walls of the prison, till the fall of Robespierre, on the 9th of Thermidor. July 27, 1794.

About two months before this event, I was seized with a fever, that in its progress had every symptom of becoming mortal, and from the effects of which I am not recovered. It was then that I remembered with renewed satisfaction, and congratulated myself most sincerely, on having written the former part of, "The Age of Reason." I had then but little expectation of surviving, and those about me had less. I know therefore, by experience, the conscientious trial of my own principles.

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I was then with three chamber comrades : Joseph Vanhuele of Bruges, Charles Bastini, and Michael Robyns of Louvain. The unceasing and anxious attention of these three friends to me, by night and day, I remember with gratitude and mention with pleasure. It happened that a physician (Dr. Graham,) and a surgeon (Mr. Bond) part of the suite of General O'Hara, were then in the Luxembourg : I ask not myself, whether it be convenient to them, as men under the English Government, that I express to them my thanks; but I should reproach myself if I did not; and also to the physician of the Luxembourg, Dr. Markoski.

I have some reason to believe, because I cannot discover any other, that this illness preserved me in existence. Among the papers of Robespierre, that were examined and reported upon to the Convention, by a Committee of Deputies, is a note in the hand writing of Robespierre, in the following words:

Demander que Thomas Paine soit decreté d'accusation, pour l'intérêt de l'Amérique autant que de la France.	Demand that Thomas Paine be decreed of accusation, for the interest of America as well as of France.
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From what cause it was that the intention was not put in execution, I know not, and cannot inform myself; and therefore I ascribe it to impossibility, on account of that illness.

The Convention, to repair as much as lay in their power the injustice I had sustained, invited me publicly and unanimously to return into the Convention, and which I accepted, to shew I could bear an injury without permitting it to injure my principles, or my disposition. It is not because right principles have been violated, that they are to be abandoned.

I have seen, since I have been at liberty, several publications written, some in America, and some in England, as answers to the former part of "The Age of Reason." If the authors of these can amuse themselves by so doing, I shall not interrupt them. They may write against the work, and against me, as much as they please, they do me more service than they intend, and I can have no objection that they write on. They will find, however, by this Second Part, without its being written as an answer to them, that they must return to their work, and spin their cobweb over again. The first is brushed away by accident.

They will now find that I have furnished myself with a Bible and Testament; and I can say also, that I have found them to be much worse books than I had conceived. If I have erred in any thing, in the former part of the Age of Reason, it has been by speaking better of some parts than they deserved.

I observe, that all my opponents resort, more or less, to what they call Scripture Evidence and Bible Authority,

Authority, to help them out. They are so little masters of the subject, as to confound a dispute about authenticity, with a dispute about doctrines; I will, however, put them right, that if they should be disposed to write any more, they may know how to begin.

Oct. 1795.

THOMAS PAINE.

THE THE AGE OF REASON.

PART THE SECOND.

IT has often been said that any thing may be proved from the Bible; but before any thing can be admitted as proved by Bible, the Bible itself must be proved to be true; for if the Bible be not true, or the truth of it be doubtful, it ceases to have authority, and cannot be admitted as proof of any thing.

It has been the practice of all Christian commentators on the Bible, and of all Christian priests and preachers, to impose the Bible on the world as a mass of truth, and as the word of God; they have disputed and wrangled, and have anathematized each other about the supposable meaning of particular parts and passages therein; one has said and insisted that such a passage meant such a thing; another, that it meant directly the contrary; and a third, that it meant neither one nor the other, but something different from both; and this they have called *understanding* the Bible.

It has happened that all the answers that I have seen to the former part of the *Age of Reason* have been written by priests; and these pious men, like their predecessors, contend and wrangle, and *understand* the Bible; each understands it differently, but each understands it best; and they have agreed in nothing, but in telling their readers, that Thomas Paine understands it not.

Now, instead of wasting their time, and heating themselves in fractious disputations about doctrinal points drawn from the Bible, these men *ought to know*, and if they do not, it is civility to inform them, that the first thing to be *understood* is, whether there is sufficient authority for believing the Bible to be the word of God, or whether there is not?

There are matters in that book, said to be done by the *express command* of God, that are as shocking to humanity, and to every idea we have of moral justice, as any thing done by Robespierre, by Carrier, by Joseph le Bon, in France; by the English government in the East Indies; or by any other assassin in modern times. When we read in the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, &c. that they (the Israelites) came by stealth upon whole nations of people, who, as the history itself shews, had given them no offence; *that they put all those nations to the sword; that they spared neither age nor infancy; that they utterly destroyed men, women, and children; that they left not a soul to breathe;* expressions that are repeated over and over again in those books, and that too with exulting ferocity; are we sure these things are facts? are we sure that the Creator of man commissioned these things to be done? are we sure that the books that tell us so, were written by his authority.

It is not the antiquity of a tale, that is any evidence of its truth; on the contrary, it is a symptom of its being fabulous; for the more ancient any history pretends to be, the more it has the resemblance of a fable. The origin of every nation is buried in fabulous tradition, and that of the Jews is as much to be suspected as any other.

To charge the commission of things upon the Almighty, which, in their own nature, and by every rule of moral justice, are crimes, as all assassination is, and more especially the assassination of infants, is matter of serious concern. The Bible tells us, that those assassinations were done by the *express command of God*. To believe therefore the Bible to be true, we must *unbelieve* all our belief in the moral justice of God; for wherein could crying or smiling infants offend? And to read the Bible without horror, we must undo every thing that is tender, sympathising, and benevolent in the heart of man. Speaking for myself, if I had no other evidence that the Bible is fabulous, than the sacrifice I must make to believe it to be true, that alone would be sufficient to determine my choice.

But in addition to all the moral evidence against the Bible, I will, in the progress of this work, produce such other evidence, as even a priest cannot deny; and shew from that evidence, that the Bible is not entitled to credit, as being the word of God.

But before I proceed to this examination, I will shew wherein the Bible differs from all other ancient writings with respect to the nature of the evidence necessary to establish its authenticity; and this is the more proper to be done, because the advocates of the Bible, in their answers to the former part of the *Age of Reason*, undertake to say, and they put some stress there-

on,

on, that the authenticity of the Bible is as well established, as that of any other ancient book: as if our belief of the one could become any rule for our belief of the other.

I know, however, but of one ancient book that authoritatively challenges universal consent and belief; and that is *Euclid's Elements of Geometry**; and the reason is, because it is a book of self-evident demonstration, entirely independent of its author and of every thing relating to time, place and circumstance. The matters contained in that book would have the same authority they now have, had they been written by any other person, or had the work been anonymous, or had the author never been known; for the identical certainty of who was the author, makes no part of our belief of the matters contained in the book. But it is quite otherwise with respect to the books ascribed to Moses, to Joshua, to Samuel, &c. those are books of *testimony*, and they testify of things naturally incredible; and therefore the whole of our belief, as to the authenticity of those books, rests, in the first place, upon the *certainty* that they were written by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel; secondly, upon the credit we give to their testimony. We may believe the first, that is, may believe the certainty of the authorship, and yet not the testimony; in the same manner that we may believe that a certain person gave evidence upon a case, and yet not believe the evidence that he gave. But if it should be found, that the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, were not written by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, every part of the authority and authenticity of those books is gone at once; for there can be no such thing as forged or invented testimony; neither can there be anonymous testimony, more especially as to things naturally incredible; such as that of talking with God face to face, or that of the sun and moon standing still at the command of a man.

The greatest part of the other ancient books are works of genius; of which kind are those ascribed to Homer, to Plato, to Aristotle to Demosthenes, to Cicero, &c. here again the author is not an essential in the credit we give to any of those works; for as works of genius, they would have the same merit they have now, were they anonymous. Nobody believes the Trojan story, as related by Homer, to be true; for it is the poet only that is admired; and the merit of the poet will remain, though the story be fabulous. But if we disbelieve the matters related by the Bible authors, (Moses for instance,) as we dis-

* Euclid, according to chronological history, lived three hundred years before Christ, and about one hundred before Archimedes; he was of the city of Alexandria in Egypt.

believe the things related by Homer, there remains nothing of Moses in our estimation, but an impostor. As to the ancient historians, from Herodotus to Tacitus, we credit them as far as they relate things probable and credible, and no further; for if we do, we must believe the two miracles which Tacitus relates were performed by Vespian, that of curing a lame man, and a blind man, in just the same manner as the same things are told of Jesus Christ by his historians. We must also believe the miracle cited by Josephus, that of the sea of Pamphilia opening to let Alexander and his army pass, as is related of the Red Sea in Exodus. These miracles are quite as well authenticated as the Bible miracles, and yet we do not believe them; consequently the degree of evidence necessary to establish our belief of things naturally incredible, whether in the Bible or elsewhere, is far greater than that which obtains our belief to natural and probable things; and therefore the advocates for the Bible have no claim to our belief of the Bible, because that we believe things stated in other ancient writings; since that we believe the things stated in those writings no farther than they are probable and credible, or because they are self evident, like Euclid; or admire them because they are elegant, like Homer; or approve them, because they are sedate, like Plato; or judicious, like Aristotle.

Having premised those things, I proceed to examine the authenticity of the Bible; and I begin with what are called the five books of Moses, *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*. My intention is to shew, that those books are spurious, and that Moses is not the author of them; and still further, that they were not written in the time of Moses, nor till several hundred years afterwards; that they are no other than an attempted history of the life of Moses, and of the times in which he is said to have lived, and also of the times prior thereto, written by some very ignorant and stupid pretenders to authorship, several hundred years after the death of Moses; as men now write histories of things that happened, or are supposed to have happened, several hundred, or several thousand years ago.

The evidence that I shall produce in this case is from the books themselves; and I will confine myself to this evidence only. Were I to refer for proofs to any of the ancient authors, whom the advocates of the Bible call prophane authors, they would controvert that authority, as I controvert theirs: I will therefore come on them on their own ground; and oppose them with their own weapon, the Bible.

In the first place, there is no affirmative evidence that Moses is the author of those books; and that he is the author, is altogether

gether an unfounded opinion got abroad, nobody knows how. The style and manner in which those books are written, give no room to believe, or even to suppose, they were written by Moses; for it is altogether the style and manner of another person speaking of Moses. In Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, (for every thing in Genesis is prior to the times of Moses, and not the least allusion is made to him therein,) the whole, I say, of these books is in the third person; it is always, *the Lord said unto Moses, or Moses said unto the Lord; or Moses said unto the People, or the People said unto Moses*; and this is the style and manner that historians use in speaking of the person whose lives and actions they are writing. It may be said that a man may speak of himself in the third person, and therefore it may be supposed that Moses did: but supposition proves nothing; and if the advocates for the belief that Moses wrote those books himself, have nothing better to advance than supposition they may as well be silent.

But granting the grammatical right, that Moses might speak of himself in the third person, because any man might speak of himself in that manner, it cannot be admitted as a fact in those books, that it is Moses who speaks, without rendering Moses truly ridiculous and absurd:—for example, Numbers, chap. xii. ver. 3. “*Now the man Moses was VERY MEEK above all the men which were on the face of the earth.*” If Moses said this of himself, instead of being the meekest of men, he was one of the most vain and arrogant of coxcombs; and the advocates for those books may now take which side they please, for both sides are against them: if Moses was not the author, the books are without authority; and if he was the author, the author is without credit, because, to boast of *meekness*, is the reverse of meekness, and is *a lie in sentiment*.

In Deuteronomy, the style and manner of writing, marks more evidently than in the former books, that Moses is not the writer. The manner here used is dramatical; the writer opens the subject by a short introductory discourse, and then introduces Moses as in the act of speaking, and when he has made Moses finish his harrangue, he (the writer) resumes his own part, and speaks till he brings Moses forward again, and at last closes the scene with an account of the death, funeral, and character of Moses.

This interchange of speakers occurs four times in this book; from the first verse of the first chapter, to the end of the fifth verse, it is the writer who speaks; he then introduces Moses as in the act of making his harrangue, and this continues to the end of the 40th verse of the fourth chapter; here the writer drops Moses, and speaks historically of what was done in consequence

sequence of what Moses, when living, is supposed to have said, and which the writer has dramatically rehearsed.

The writer opens the subject again in the first verse of the fifth chapter, though it is only by saying, that Moses called the people of Israel together; he then introduces Moses as before, and continues him as in the act of speaking, to the end of the 26th chapter. He does the same thing at the beginning of the 27th chapter, and continues Moses, as in the act of speaking, to the end of the 28th chapter. At the 29th chapter the writer speaks again through the whole of the first verse, and the first line of the second verse, where he introduces Moses for the last time, and continues him, as in the act of speaking, to the end of the 33d chapter.

The writer having now finished the rehearsal on the part of Moses, comes forward, and speaks through the whole of the last chapter: he begins by telling the reader that Moses went up to the top of Pisgah, that he saw from thence the land which (the writer says) had been promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that *he*, Moses died there, in the land of Moab, that he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, but that no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day, that is unto the time in which the writer lived, who wrote the book of Deuteronomy. The writer then tells us, that Moses was one hundred and ten years of age when he died—that his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated; and he concludes, by saying, that there arose not a prophet *since* in Israel like unto Moses, whom, says this anonymous writer, the Lord knew face to face.

Having thus shewn, as far as grammatical evidence implies, that Moses was not the writer of those books, I will, after making a few observations on the inconsistencies of the writer of the book of Deuteronomy, proceed to shew from the historical and chronological evidence contained in those books, that Moses *was not*, because *he could not be*, the writer of them; and consequently, that there is no authority for believing, that the inhuman and horrid butcheries of men, women, and children, told of in those books were done, as those books say they were, at the command of God. It is a duty incumbent on every true deist, that he vindicates the moral justice of God, against the calumnies of the Bible.

The writer of the book of Deuteronomy, whoever he was, for it is an anonymous work, is obscure, and also contradictory with himself in the account he has given of Moses.

After telling that Moses went to the top of Pisgah (and it does not appear from any account that he ever came down again,) he tells us, that Moses died *there* in the land of Moab, and that *he* buried him in a valley in the land of Moab: but as there is no antecedent to the pronoun *he*, there is no knowing
who

who *he* was, that did bury him. If the writer meant that he (God) buried him, how should *he* (the writer) know it? or why should we (the readers) believe him? since we know not who the writer was that tells us so, for certainly Moses could not himself tell where he was buried.

The writer also tells us, that no man knoweth where the sepulchre of Moses is unto this day, meaning the time in which this writer lived; how then should he know that Moses was buried in a valley in the land of Moab? for as the writer lived long after the time of Moses, as is evident from his using the expression of *unto this day*, meaning a great length of time after the death of Moses, he certainly was not at his funeral; and, on the other hand, it is impossible that Moses himself could say, that *no man knoweth where the sepulchre is unto this day*. To make Moses the speaker, would be an improvement on the play of a child that hides himself, and cries *nobody can find me*; nobody can find Moses.

This writer has now told us how he came by the speeches which he has put into the mouth of Moses to speak, and therefore we have a right to conclude, that he either composed them himself, or wrote them from oral tradition. One or other of these is the more probable, since he has given, in the fifth chapter, a table of commandments, in which that called the fourth commandment is different from the fourth commandment in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. In that of Exodus, the reason given for keeping the seventh day is, because (says the commandment) God made the heavens and the earth in six days, and rested on the seventh; but in that of Deuteronomy, the reason given is that it was the day on which the children of Israel came out of Egypt, and *therefore*, says this commandment *the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day*. This makes no mention of the creation, nor that of the coming out of Egypt. There are also many things given as laws of Moses in this book, that are not to be found in any of the other books among which is that inhuman and brutal law, chap. xxi. ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, which authorizes parents, the father and the mother, to bring their own children to have them stoned to death, for what is pleased to call stubbornness. But priests have always been fond of preaching up Deuteronomy, for Deuteronomy preaches up tythes: and it is from this book, chap. xxv. ver. 4, they have taken the phrase and applied it to tything, that *thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn*: and that this might not escape observation, they have noted it in the table of contents, at the head of the chapter, though it is only a single verse of less than two lines. O priests! priests! ye are willing to be compared to an ox, for the sake

of tythes. Though it is impossible for us to know *identically* who the writer of Deuteronomy was, it is not difficult to discover him *professionally*, that he was some Jewish priest, who lived, as I shall shew in the course of this work, at least three hundred and fifty years after the time of Moses.

I come now to speak of the historical and chronological evidence. The chronology that I shall use is the Bible chronology; for I mean not to go out of the Bible for evidence of any thing, but to make the Bible itself prove historically and chronologically that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him. It is therefore proper that I inform the readers (such an one, at least as may not have the opportunity of knowing it) that in the larger Bibles, and also in some smaller ones, there is a series of chronology printed in the margin of every page, for the purpose of shewing how long the historical matters stated in each page happened, or are supposed to have happened, before Christ, and consequently the distance of time between one historical circumstance and another.

I begin with the book of Genesis. In the 14th chapter of Genesis, the writer gives an account of Lot being taken prisoner in a battle between the four kings against five, and carried off; and that when the account of Lot being taken, came to Abraham, that he armed all his household, and marched to rescue Lot from the captors; and that he pursued them unto Dan, (ver 14.)

To shew in what manner this expression of *pursuing them unto Dan* applies to the case in question, I will refer to two circumstances, the one in America, the other in France. The city now called New York, in America, was originally New Amsterdam; and the town in France, lately called Havre-Marat, was before called Havre-de-Grace. New Amsterdam was changed to New York in the year 1664: Havre-de-Grace to Havre Marat in the year 1793. Should, therefore, any writing be found, though without date, in which the name of New York should be mentioned it would be certain evidence that such a writing could not have been written before, and must have been written after New Amsterdam was changed to New York, and consequently not till after the year 1664, or at least during the course of that year. And in like manner, any dateless writing, with the name of Havre-Marat, would be certain evidence that such a writing must have been written after Havre-de-Grace became Havre-Marat, and consequently not till after the year 1793, or at least during the course of that year.

I now come to the application of those cases, and to shew that there was no such place as Dan, till many years after the death of Moses; and consequently that Moses could not be the writer

of the book of Genesis, where this account of pursuing them unto Dan is given.

The place that is called Dan in the Bible, was originally a town of the Gentiles, called Laish; and when the tribe of Dan seized upon this town, they changed it's name to Dan, in commemoration of Dan, who was the father of that tribe, and the great grandson of Abraham,

To establish this in proof, it is necessary to refer from Genesis to the 18th chapter of the book called the book of Judges. It is there said, (ver. 27,) that *they* (the Danites) *came unto Laish to a people that were quiet and secure, and they smote them with the edge of the sword, (the Bible is filled with murder,) and burned the city with fire; and they built a city, (ver. 28,) and dwelt therein, and they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.*

This account of the Danites taking possession of Laish, and changing it to Dan, is placed in the book of Judges immediately after the death of Sampson. The death of Sampson is said to have happened 1120 years before Christ, and that of Moses 1451 before Christ; and therefore, according to the historical arrangement, the place was not called Dan till 331 years after the death of Moses.

There is a striking confusion between the historical and the chronological arrangement in the book of Judges. The five last chapters, as they stand in the book, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, are put chronologically before all the preceding chapters; they are made to be 28 years before the 16th chapter, 266 before the 15th, 245 before the 13th, 195 before the 9th, 90 before the 4th, and 15 years before the 1st chapter. This shews the uncertain and fabulous state of the Bible. According to the chronological arrangement, the taking of Laish, and giving it the name of Dan, is made to be twenty years after the death of Joshua, who was the successor of Moses; and by the historical order, as it stands in the book, it is made to be 306 years after the death of Joshua, and 331 after that of Moses; but they both exclude Moses from being the writer of Genesis, because according to either of the statements, no such a place as Dan existed in the time of Moses; and therefore the writer of Genesis must have been some person that lived after the town of Laish had the name of Dan; and who that person was nobody knows, and consequently the book of Genesis is anonymous, and without authority.

I come now to state another point of historical and chronological evidence, and to shew therefrom, as in the preceding case, that Moses is not the author of the book of Genesis.

In the 36th chapter of Genesis there is given a genealogy of the sons and descendants of Esau, who are called Edomites, and also a list, by name, of the kings of Edom; in enumerating of which, it is said, ver. 31, "*And these are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.*"

Now, were any dateless writing to be found, in which, speaking of any past events, the writer should say, these things happened before there was any congress in America, or before there was any convention in France, it would be evidence that such writing could not have been written before, and could only be written after there was a congress in America, or a convention in France, as the case might be: and consequently that it could not be written by any person who died before there was a congress in the one country, or a convention in the other.

Nothing is more frequent, as well in history as in conversation, than to refer to a fact in the room of a date; it is most natural so to do, first, because a fact fixes itself in the memory better than a date; secondly, because the fact includes the date and serves to give two ideas at once; and this manner of speaking by circumstances, implies as positively, that the fact alluded to is past, as if it was so expressed. When a person in speaking upon any matter, says, it was before I was married, or before my son was born, or before I went to America, or before I went to France, it is absolutely understood, and intended to be understood, that he has been married, that he has had a son, that he has been in America, or been in France. Language does not admit of using this mode of expression in any other sense; and whenever such an expression is found any where, it can only be understood in the sense in which only it could have been used.

The passage, therefore, that I have quoted,—"that these are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel," could only have been written after the first king began to reign over them; and consequently that the book of Genesis, so far from having been written by Moses, could not have been written till the time of Saul at least. This is the positive sense of the passage: but the expression, *any king*, implies more kings than one; at least it implies two; and this will carry it to the time of David; and if taken in a general sense, it carries itself through all times of the Jewish monarchy.

Had we met with this verse in any part of the Bible that professed to have been written after kings began to reign in Israel, it would have been impossible not to have seen the application of it. It happens then that this is the case; the two books of Chronicles, which give a history of all the kings of Israel,

Israel, are *professedly*, as well as in fact, written after the Jewish monarchy began, and this verse that I have quoted, and all the remaining verses of the 36th chapter of Genesis, are, word for word, in the first chapter of Chronicles, beginning at the 43d verse.

It was with consistency that the writer of the Chronicles could say, as he has said, 1st Chron. chap. i. verse 43, *These are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel*, because he was going to give, and has given, a list of the kings that had reigned in Israel; but as it is impossible that the same expression could have been used before that period, it is as certain as any thing can be proved from historical language, that this part of Genesis is taken from Chronicles, and that Genesis is not so old as Chronicles, and probably not so old as the book of Homer, or as Æsop's fables; admitting Homer to have been, as the tables of Chronology state, contemporary with David or Solomon; and Æsop to have lived about the end of the Jewish monarchy.

Take away from Genesis the belief that Moses was the author, on which only the strange belief that it is the word of God has stood, and there remains nothing of Genesis but an anonymous book of stories, fables, and traditionary or invented absurdities, or of downright lies. The story of Eve and the serpent and of Noah and his ark, drops to a level with the Arabian Tales, without the merit of being entertaining; and the account of men living to eight and nine hundred years, becomes as fabulous as the immortality of the giants of the Mythology.

Besides the character of Moses, as stated in the Bible, is the most horrid that can be imagined. If those accounts be true, he was the wretch that first began and carried on wars on the score, or on the pretence of religion; and under that mask, or that infatuation, committed the most unexampled atrocities that are to be found in the history of any nation, of which I will state only one instance:

When the Jewish army returned from one of their plundering and murdering excursions, the account goes on as follows Numbers, chap. xxxi. ver. 13.

“And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation went forth to meet them without the camp; and Moses was wrath with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle; and Moses said unto them, *Have ye saved all the women alive?* behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the council of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague

among the congregation of the Lord. Now, therefore, *kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him; but all the women-children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.*"

Among the detestable villains that in any period of the world have disgraced the name of man, it is impossible to find a greater than Moses, if this account be true. Here is an order to butcher the boys, to massacre the mothers, and debauch the daughters.

Let any mother put herself in the situation of those mothers one child murdered, another destined to violation and herself in the hands of an executioner: let any daughter put herself in the situation of those daughters, destined as prey to the murderers of a mother and a brother, and what will be their feelings? It is in vain that we attempt to impose upon nature, for nature will have her course, and the religion that tortures all her social ties is a false religion.

After this detestable order, follows an account of the plunder taken, and the manner of dividing it; and here it is that the profaneness of priestly hypocrisy increases the catalogue of crimes. Verse 37, "*And the Lord's tribute* of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen; and the beeves were thirty and six thousand, of which the *Lord's tribute* was threescore and twelve; and the asses were thirty thousand, of which the *Lord's tribute* was threescore and one; and the persons were sixteen thousand, of which the *Lord's tribute* was thirty and two." In short the matters contained in this chapter, as well as in many other parts of the Bible, are too horrid for humanity to read, or for decency to hear; for it appears from the 35th verse of this chapter, that the number of women children consigned to debauchery, by the order of Moses was thirty-two thousand.

People in general know not what wickedness there is in this pretended word of God. Brought up in habits of superstition they take it for granted, that the Bible is true, and that it is good; they permit themselves not to doubt of it; and they carry the ideas they form of the benevolence of the Almighty to the book which they have been taught to believe was written by his authority. Good heavens! it is quite another thing it is a book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy; for what can be greater blasphemy than to ascribe the wickedness of man to the orders of the Almighty?

But to return to my subject, that of shewing that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him, and that the Bible is spurious. The two instances I have already given would be sufficient, without any additional evidence, to invalidate the authenticity

authenticity of any book that pretended to be four or five hundred years more ancient than the matters it speaks of or refers to, as facts; for in the case of *pursuing them unto Dan*, and of the *kings that reigned over the children of Israel*, not even the flimsy pretence of prophecy can be pleaded. The expressions are in the preter tense, and it would be downright idiotism to say that a man could prophecy in the preter tense.

But there are many other passages scattered throughout those books, that unite in the same point of evidence. It is said in Exodus (another of the books ascribed to Moses), chap. xvi. ver. 34, "*And the children of Israel did eat manna until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.*"

Whether the children of Israel ate manna or not, or what manna was, or whether it was any thing more than a kind of fungus, or small mushroom, or other vegetable substance common to that part of the country, makes no part of my argument; all that I mean to shew is, that it is not Moses that could write this account, because the account extends itself beyond the life time of Moses. Moses according to the Bible, (but it is such a book of lies and contradictions, there is no knowing which part to believe, or whether any), died in the wilderness, and never came upon the borders of the land of Canaan; and consequently it could not be he, that said what the children of Israel did, or what they ate when they came there. This account of eating manna, which they tell us was written by Moses, extends itself to the time of Joshua, the successor of Moses; as appears by the account given in the book of Joshua, after the children of Israel had passed the river Jordan, and came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Joshua, chap. v. ver. 12. "*And the manna ceased on the morrow, after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.*"

But a more remarkable instance than this occurs in Deuteronomy; which while it shews that Moses could not be the writer of that book, shews also the fabulous notions that prevailed at that time about giants. In the third chapter of Deuteronomy, among the conquests said to be made by Moses, is an account of the taking of Og, king of Basan, verse 12. "*For only Og, king of Basan, remained of the race of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron, is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.*" A cubit is 1 foot $9\frac{8}{1000}$ inches; the length therefore of the bed was 16 feet 4 inches, and the breadth 7 feet 4 inches:

ches: thus much for this giant's bed. Now for the historical part which, though the evidence is not so direct and positive as in the former cases, it is nevertheless very presumable and corroborating evidence, and is better than the *best* evidence on the contrary side.

The writer by way of proving the existence of this giant, refers to his bed, as to an *ancient relick*, and says, is it not in Rabbath (or Rabbah) of the children of Ammon? meaning that it is; for such is frequently the Bible method of affirming a thing. But it could not be Moses that said this, because Moses could know nothing about Rabbah, nor of what was in it. Rabbah was not a city belonging to this giant king, nor was it one of the cities that Moses took. The knowledge, therefore, that this bed was at Rabbah, and of the particulars of its dimensions must be referred to the time when Rabbah was taken, and this was not till four hundred years after the death of Moses, for which see 2 Sam. chap. xii. ver. 26. "And Joab (David's general) fought against *Rabbah of the children of Ammon*, and took the royal city, &c."

As I am not undertaking to point out all the contradictions in time, place, and circumstance, that abound in the books ascribed to Moses, and which prove to demonstration, that those books could not be written by Moses, nor in the time of Moses; I proceed to the book of Joshua, and to shew that Joshua is not the author of that book, and that it is anonymous, and without authority. The evidence I shall produce is contained in the book itself; I will not go out of the Bible for proof against the supposed authenticity of the Bible. False testimony is always good against itself.

Joshua, according to the first chapter of Joshua, was the immediate successor of Moses; he was moreover a military man, which Moses was not; and he continued as chief of the people of Israel twenty-five years; that is from the time that Moses died, which, according to the Bible chronology, was 1451 years before Christ, until 1426 years before Christ, when, according to the same chronology, Joshua died. If therefore we find in this book, said to have been written by Joshua, references to *facts done* after the death of Joshua, it is evidence that Joshua could not be the author; and also that the book could not have been written till after the time of the latest fact which it records. As to the character of the book, it is horrid; it is a military history of rapine and murder; as savage and brutal as those recorded of his predecessor in villainy and hypocrisy, Moses; and the blasphemy consists, as in the former books in ascribing those deeds to the orders of the Almighty.

In the first place, the book of Joshua, as is the case in the preceding books, is written in the third person; it is the historian

historian of Joshua that speaks, for it would have been absurd and vain-glorious, that Joshua should say of himself, as is said of him in the last verse of the sixth chapter, that "*his fame was noised throughout all the country.*" I now come more immediately to the proof.

In the 24th chapter, ver. 31, it is said, "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and *all the days of the elders that over-lived Joshua.*" Now in the name of common sense, can it be Joshua that relates what people had done after he was dead? This account must not only have been written by some historian that lived after Joshua, but that lived also after the elders that had out-lived Joshua.

There are several passages of a general meaning with respect to time, scattered throughout the book of Joshua, that carries the time in which the book was written to a distance from the time of Joshua, but without marking by exclusion any particular time, as in the passage above quoted. In that passage the time that intervened between the death of Joshua, and the death of the elders, is excluded descriptively and absolutely, and the evidence substantiates that the book could not have been written till after the death of the last.

But though the passages to which I allude, and which I am going to quote, do not designate any particular time by exclusion, they imply a time far more distant from the days of Joshua, than is contained between the death of Joshua and the death of the elders. Such is the passage, chap. x. ver. 14; where, after giving an account that the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, at the command of Joshua, (a tale fit only to amuse children *,) the passage

* This tale of the sun standing still upon mount Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, is one of those fables that detects itself. Such a circumstance could not have happened without being known all over the world. One half would have wondered why the sun did not rise, and the other why it did not set; and the tradition of it would be universal; whereas there is not a nation in the world that knows any thing about it. But why must the moon stand still? What occasion could there be for moon-light in the day-time, and that too whilst the sun shined? As a poetical figure, the whole is well enough; it is akin to that in the song of Deborah and Baruk, *The stars in their courses fought against Sisera*; but it is inferior to the figurative declaration of Mahomet, to the persons who came to expostulate with him on his goings on; *Wert thou, said he, to come to me with the sun in thy right hand, and the moon in thy left it should not alter my career.* For Joshua to have exceeded Mahomet, he should have put the sun and moon, one in each pocket, and carried them as Guy Faux carried his dark lanthorn, and taken them out to shine as he might happen to want them. The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related, that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime, makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous, makes the sublime again; the account, however, abstracted from the poetical fancy, shews the ignorance of Joshua, for he should have commanded the earth to have stood still.

says—" And there was no day like that, before it, nor *after it*, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of man.

The time implied by the expression *after it*, that is, after that day, being put in comparison with all the time that passed *before it*, must, in order to give any expressive signification to the passage, mean a *great length of time*:—for example it would have been ridiculous to have said so the next day, or the next week, or the next month, or the next year; to give therefore meaning to the passage, comparative with the wonder it relates, and the prior time it alludes to, it must mean centuries of years; less however than one, would be trifling; and less than two, would be barely admissible.

A distant but general time is also expressed in the 8th chapter, where, after giving an account of the taking the city of Ai, it is said, ver. 28, " And Joshua burned Ai, and made it an heap for ever, a desolation *unto this day*;" and again, ver. 29, where speaking of the king of Ai, whom Joshua had hanged, and buried at the entering of the gate, it is said, " And he raised thereon a great heap of stones, which remaineth *unto this day*," that is, unto the day or time in which the writer of the book of Joshua lived. And again, in the 10th chapter, where after speaking of the five kings, whom Joshua had hanged on five trees, and then thrown in a cave, it is said, " And he laid great stones on the cave's mouth, which remain *unto this very day*."

In enumerating the several exploits of Joshua, and of the tribes, and of the places which they conquered or attempted, it is said, chap. xv. ver. 63, " As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah *AT JERUSALEM unto this day*." The question upon this passage is, At what time did the Jebusites and the children of Judah dwell together at Jerusalem? as this matter occurs again in the first chapter of Judges, I shall reserve my observations till I come to that part.

Having thus shewn from the book of Joshua itself, without any auxiliary evidence whatever, that Joshua is not the author of that book, and that it is anonymous, and consequently without authority, I proceed, as before mentioned, to the book of judges.

The book of Judges is anonymous on the face of it; and therefore, even the pretence is wanting to call it the word of God; it has not so much as a nominal voucher; it is altogether fatherless.

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This book begins with the same expression as the book of Joshua. That of Joshua begins chap. i. ver. 1. *Now after the death of Moses, &c.* and this of Judges, begins, *Now after the death of Joshua, &c.* This, and the similarity of style between the two books, indicate that they are the work of the same author; but who he was, is altogether unknown; the only point that the book proves is, that the author lived long after the time of Joshua; for though it begins as if it followed immediately after his death, the second chapter is an epitome or abstract of the whole book, which, according to the Bible chronology, extends its history through a space of 306 years; that is from the death of Joshua, 1426 years before Christ, to the death of Sampson, 1120 years before Christ, and only 25 years before Saul went *to seek his father's asses, and was made king.* But there is good reason to believe, that it was not written till the time of David at least, and that the book of Joshua was not written before the same time.

In the first chapter of Judges, the writer, after announcing the death of Joshua, proceeds to tell what happened between the children of Judah and the native inhabitants of the land of Canaan. In this statement, the writer, having abruptly mentioned Jerusalem in the 7th verse, says immediately after, in the 8th verse, by way of explanation, “Now the children of Judah *had* fought against Jerusalem, and *taken* it;” consequently, this book could not have been written before Jerusalem had been taken. The reader will recollect the quotation I have just before made from the 15th chapter of Joshua, ver. 63, where it is said, that *the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem at this day;* meaning the time when the book of Joshua was written.

The evidence I have already produced, to prove that the books I have hitherto treated of, were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, nor till many years after their death, if such persons ever lived, is already so abundant, that I can afford to admit this passage with less weight than I am entitled to draw from it. For the case is, that so far as the Bible can be credited as an history, the city of Jerusalem was not taken till the time of David; and consequently, that the book of Joshua, and of Judges, were not written till after the commencement of the reign of David, which was 370 years after the death of Joshua.

The name of the city that was afterward called Jerusalem, was originally Jebus, or Jebusi, and was the capital of the Jebusites. The account of David's taking this city is given in 2 Samuel, chap. v. ver. 4, &c. also in 1 Chron. chap. xiv. ver. 4, &c. There is no mention in any part of the Bible that

it was ever taken before, nor any account that favours such an opinion. It is not said, either in Samuel or in Chronicles, that they *utterly destroyed men, women, and children; that they left not a soul to breathe*, as is said of their other conquests; and the silence here observed, implies that it was taken by capitulation and that the Jebusites, the native inhabitants, continued to live in the place after it was taken. The account, therefore, given in Joshua, that *the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah* at Jerusalem at this day, corresponds to no other time than after taking the city by David.

Having now shewn that every book in the Bible, from Genesis to Judges, is without authenticity, I come to the book of Ruth, an idle, bungling story, foolishly told, nobody knows by whom, about a strolling country girl creeping slyly to bed to her cousin Boaz. Pretty stuff indeed to be called the word of God. It is, however, one of the best books in the Bible, for it is free from murder and rapine.

I come next to the two books of Samuel, and to shew that those books were not written by Samuel, nor till a great length of time after the death of Samuel; and that they are, like all the former books, anonymous, and without authority.

To be convinced that these books have been written much later than the time of Samuel, and consequently not by him, it is only necessary to read the account which the writer gives of Saul going to seek his father's asses, and of his interview with Samuel, of whom Saul went to enquire about those lost asses, as foolish people now-a-days go to a conjurer to enquire after lost things.

The writer, in relating this story of Saul, Samuel, and the asses, does not tell it as a thing that had just then happened, but as an ancient *story in the time this writer lived*: for he tells it in the language or terms used at the time that Samuel lived, which obliges the writer to explain the story in the terms or language used in the time the *writer* lived.

Samuel, in the account given of him in the first of those books, chap. ix. is called *the seer*; and it is by this term that Saul enquires after him; ver. 11. "And as they, (Saul and his servant) went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water; and they said unto them, *Is the seer here?*" Saul then went according to the direction of these maidens, and met Samuel without knowing him, and said unto him, ver. 18, "Tell me, I pray thee, where the *seer's house* is?" and Samuel answered Saul, and said, *I am the seer.*"

As the writer of the book of Samuel relates these questions and answers, in the language or manner of speaking used in the time they are said to have been spoken; and as that manner of speaking

speaking was out of use when this author wrote he found it necessary, in order to make the story understood to explain the terms in which these questions and answers are spoken ; and he does this in the 9th verse, where he says, “ *Before-time* in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God thus he spake, Come let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet, was *before-time* called a seer.” This proves, as I have before said, that this story of Saul, Samuel, and the asses, was an ancient story at the time the book of Samuel was written, and consequently that Samuel did not write it, and that the book is without authenticity.

But if we go further into those books, the evidence is still more positive that Samuel is not the writer of them ; for they relate things that did not happen till several years after the death of Samuel. Samuel died before Saul ; for the 1st of Samuel chap. xxviii. tells, that Saul and the witch of Endor conjured Samuel up after he was dead ; yet the history of matters contained in those books, is extended through the remaining part of Saul’s life, and to the latter end of the life of David, who succeeded Saul. The account of the death and burial of Samuel (a thing which he could not write himself) is related in the 25th chapter of the first book of Samuel ; and the chronology affixed to this chapter makes this to be 1060 years before Christ ; yet the history of this *first* book is brought down to 1056 years before Christ, that is, to the death of Saul, which was not till four years after the death of Samuel.

The second book of Samuel begins with an account of things that did not happen till four years after Samuel was dead ; for it begins with the reign of David, who succeeded Saul, and it goes on to the end of David’s reign, which was forty-three years after the death of Samuel ; and therefore the books are in themselves positive evidence that they were not written by Samuel.

I have now gone through all the books in the first part of the Bible, to which the names of persons are affixed, as being the authors of those books, and which the church, styling itself the Christian church, have imposed upon the world as the writings of Moses, Joshua and Samuel ; and I have detected and proved the falshood of this imposition. And now ye priests, of every description, who have preached and written against the former part of the *Age of Reason*, what have ye to say ? Will ye with all this mass of evidence against you, and staring you in the face still have the assurance to march into your pulpits, and continue to impose these books on your congregations as the works of *inspired penmen*, and the word of God ? when it is as evident as demonstration can make truth appear, that the persons who ye
say,

say, are the authors, are *not* the authors, and that ye know not who the authors are. What shadow of pretence have ye now to produce, for continuing the blasphemous fraud? What have ye still to offer against the pure and moral religion of deism, in support of your system of falshood, idolatry, and pretended revelation? Had the cruel and murdering orders, with which the Bible is filled, and the numberless torturing executions of men, women, and children, in consequence of those orders, been ascribed to some friend, whose memory you revered, you would have glowed with satisfaction at detecting the falshood of the charge, and gloried in defending his injured fame. It is because ye are sunk in the cruelty of superstition, or feel no interest in the honour of your Creator, that ye listen to the horrid tales of the Bible, or hear them with callous indifference. The evidence I have produced, and shall still produce in the course of this work, to prove that the Bible is without authority will, whilst it wounds the stubbornness of a priest relieve and tranquillize the minds of millions: it will free them from all those hard thoughts of the Almighty, which priest-craft and the Bible had infused into their minds, and which stood in everlasting opposition to all their ideas of his moral justice and benevolence.

I come now to the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles. Those books are altogether historical, and are chiefly confined to the lives and actions of the Jewish kings, who in general were a parcel of rascals: but these are matters with which we have no more concern, than we have with the Roman emperors, or Homer's account of the Trojan war. Besides which, as those books are anonymous, and as we know nothing of the writer, or of his character, it is impossible for us to know what degree of credit to give to the matters related therein. Like all other ancient histories, they appear to be a jumble of fable and of fact, and of probable and of improbable things, but which distance of time and place, and change of circumstances in the world, have rendered obsolete and uninteresting.

The chief use I shall make of those books, will be that of comparing them with each other, and with other parts of the Bible, to shew the confusion, contradiction, and cruelty, in this pretended word of God.

The first book of Kings begins with the reign of Solomon, which according to the Bible chronology, was 1015 years before Christ; and the second book ends 588 years before Christ being a little after the reign of Zedekiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, after taking Jerusalem, and conquering the Jews, carried captive to Babylon. The two books include a space of four hundred and twenty-seven years.

The

The two books of Chronicles are an history of the same times, and in general of the same persons, by another author; for it would be absurd to suppose that the same author wrote the history twice over. The first book of Chronicles (after giving the genealogy from Adam to Saul, which takes up the first nine chapters) begins with the reign of David; and the last book ends, as in the last book of Kings, soon after the reign of Zedekiah, about 588 years before Christ. The two last verses of the last chapter bring the history fifty-two years more forward, that is to 536. But these verses do not belong to the book, as I shall shew, when I come to speak of the book of Ezra.

The two books of Kings, besides the history of Saul, David, and Solomon, who reigned over *all* Israel, contain an abstract of the lives of seventeen kings and one queen, who are stiled kings of Judah; and of nineteen, who are stiled kings of Israel, for the Jewish nation, immediately on the death of Solomon, split into two parties, who chose separate kings, and who carried on most rancorous wars against each other.

These two books are little more than a history of assassinations, treachery, and wars. The cruelties that the Jews had accustomed themselves to practise on the Canaanites, whose country they had savagely invaded, under a pretended gift from God, they afterwards practised as furiously on each other. Scarcely half their kings died a natural death, and in some instances, whole families were destroyed to secure possession to the successor, who, after a few years, and sometimes only a few months, or less, shared the same fate. In the tenth chapter of the second book of kings, an account is given of two baskets full of children's heads, 70 in number, being exposed at the entrance of the city; they were the children of Ahab, and were murdered by the orders of Jehu, whom Elisha, the pretended man of God, had anointed to be king over Israel, on purpose to commit this bloody deed, and assassinate his predecessor. And in the account of the reign of Manaham, one of the kings of Israel, who had murdered Shallum, who had reigned but one month, it is said 2 Kings, chap. xv. ver. 16. that Manaham smote the city of Tiphshah, because they opened not the city to him, *and all the women therein that were with child be ripped up.*

Could we permit ourselves to suppose that the Almighty would distinguish any nation of people by the name of *his chosen people*, we must suppose that people to have been an example to all the rest of the world of the purest piety and humanity, and not such a nation of ruffians and cut-throats as the ancient Jews were; a people, who corrupted by, and copying after such monsters and imposters as Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David, had distinguished themselves above

all others, on the face of the known earth, for barbarity and wickedness. If we will not stubbornly shut our eyes, and steel our hearts, it is impossible not to see, in spite of all that long-established superstition imposes upon the mind, that the flattering appellation of *his chosen people* is no other than a LIE, which the priests and leaders of the Jews had invented, to cover the baseness of their own characters; and which Christian priests, sometimes as corrupt, and often as cruel, have professed to believe.

The two books of Chronicles are a repetition of the same crimes; but the history is broken in several places, by the author leaving out the reign of some of their kings; and in this, as well as in that of Kings, there is such a frequent transition from kings of Judah, to kings of Israel, and from kings of Israel, to kings of Judah, that the narrative is obscure in the reading. In the same book the history sometimes contradicts itself: for example, in the second book of Kings, chap. i. ver. 8, we are told, but in rather ambiguous terms, that after the death of Ahaziah, king of Israel, Jehoram, or Joram, (who was of the house of Ahab), reigned in his stead in the *second year* of Jehoram, or Joram, son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; and in chap. viii. ver. 16, of the same book, it is said, and in the *fifth year* of Joram, the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began to reign; that is, one chapter says, Joram of Judah, began to reign in the *second year* of Joram of Israel; and the other chapter says, that Joram of Israel began to reign in the *fifth year* of Joram of Judah.

Several of the most extraordinary matters related in one history, as having happened during the reign of such or such of their kings, are not to be found in the other in relating the reign of the same king: for example, the two first rival kings, after the death of Solomon, were Rehoboam and Jeroboam; and in 1 Kings, chap. xii. and xiii. an account is given of Jeroboam making an offering of burnt incense, and that a man, who is there called a man of God, cried out against the altar, chap. xiii. ver. 2, "O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places, that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burned upon thee."—Ver. 3, "And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, *Lay hold on him*; and his hand which he put out against him, *dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.*"

One would think that such an extraordinary case as this, (which is spoken of as a judgement), happening to the chief of one of the parties, and that at the first moment of the separation of the Israelites into two nations, would, if it had been true, been recorded in both histories. But though men in later times have believed *all that the prophets have said unto them*, it does not appear, that those prophets, or historians believed each other : they knew each other too well.

A long account also is given in Kings about Elijah. It runs through several chapters, and concludes with telling, 2 Kings, chap. ii. ver. 11. "And it came to pass, as they (Elijah and Elisha) still went on, and talked, that behold there appeared *a chariot of fire, and horses of fire*, and parted them both asunder, and *Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven.*" Hum ! this the author of Chronicles, miraculous as the story is, makes no mention of, though he mentions Elijah by name ; neither does he say any thing of the story related in the second chapter of the same book of Kings, of a parcel of children calling Elisha *bald head, bald head*; and that this *man of God*, ver. 24, "turned back, and looked upon them, and *curst them in the name of the Lord*; and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." He also passes over in silence the story told, 2 Kings, chap. xiii. that when they were burying a man in the sepulchre, where Elisha had been buried, it happened, that the dead man, as they were letting him down, (ver. 21,) "touched the bones of Elisha, and he (the dead man) *revived, and stood up on his feet.*" The story does not tell us whether they buried the man, notwithstanding he revived and stood upon his feet, or drew him up again. Upon all these stories, the writer of the Chronicles is as silent as any writer of the present day, who did not chuse to be accused of *lying*, or at least of *romancing*, would be about stories of the same kind.

But, however these two historians may differ from each other with respect to the tales related by either, they are silent alike with respect to those men stiled prophets, whose writing fill up the latter part of the Bible. Isaiah, who lived in the time of Hezekiah, is mentioned in Kings, and again in Chronicles, when these histories are speaking of that reign ; but except in one or two instances at most, and those very slightly, none of the rest are so much as spoken of, or even their existence hinted at ; though, according to the Bible chronology, they lived within the time those histories were written ; and some of them long before. If those prophets, as they are called, were men of such importance in their day, as the compilers of the Bible, and priests, and commentators, have since represented them

them to be, how can it be accounted for, that not one of those histories should say any thing about them?

The history in the books of Kings and of Chronicles is brought forward, as I have already said to the year 588 before Christ; it will therefore be proper to examine, which of these prophets lived before that period.

Here follows a table of all the prophets, with the times in which they lived before Christ, according to the chronology affixed to the first chapter of each of the books of the prophets; and also of the number of years they lived before the books of Kings and Chronicles were written.

TABLE of the prophets, with the time in which they lived before Christ, and also before the books of Kings and Chronicles were written.

Names.		Years before Christ.	Years bef. Kings and Chronicles.	Observations.
Isaiah	-	760	172	mentioned.
Jeremiah	-	629	41	} mentioned only in the last chapter of Chronicles.
Ezekiel	-	595	7	
Daniel	-	607	19	not mentioned.
Hosea	-	785	97	not mentioned.
Joel	-	800	212	not mentioned.
Amos	-	789	199	not mentioned.
Obadiah	-	789	199	not mentioned.
Jonah	-	862	274	see the note *.
Micah	-	750	162	not mentioned.
Nahum	-	713	125	not mentioned.
Habbakuk	-	620	38	not mentioned.
Zephaniah	-	630	42	not mentioned.
Haggai	} after the year '588			
Zechariah				
Malachi				

This table is either not very honourable for the Bible historians, or not very honourable for the Bible prophets; and

* In 2 Kings, chap. xiv. ver. 25, the name of Jonah is mentioned on account of the restoration of a tract of land by Jeroboam; but nothing further is said of him, nor is any allusion made to the book of Jonah, nor to his expedition to Nineveh, nor to his encounter with the whale.

I leave

I leave to priests and, commentators, who are very learned in little things, to settle the point of *etiquette* between the two; and to assign a reason, why the authors of Kings and of Chronicles have treated those prophets, whom, in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have considered as poets, with as much degrading silence as any historian of the present day would treat Peter Pindar.

I have one more observation to make on the book of Chronicles; after which I shall pass on to review the remaining books of the Bible.

In my observations on the book of Genesis, I have quoted a passage from the 36th chapter, ver. 31, which evidently refers to a time, *after* that kings began to reign over the children of Israel; and I have shewn that as this verse is verbatim the same as in 1 Chronicles, chap. 1. ver. 43, where it stands consistently with the order of history, which in Genesis it does not, that the verse in Genesis, and a great part of the 36th chapter, have been taken from Chronicles; and that the book of Genesis, though it is placed first in the Bible, and ascribed to Moses, has been manufactured by some unknown person, after the book of Chronicles was written, which was not until at least eight hundred and sixty years after the time of Moses.

The evidence I proceed by, to substantiate this, is regular, and has in it but two stages. First, as I have already stated, that the passage in Genesis refers itself for *time* to Chronicles; secondly, that the book of Chronicles, to which this passage refers itself, was not *began* to be written until at least eight hundred and sixty years after the time of Moses. To prove this, we have only to look into the thirteenth verse of the third chapter of the first book of Chronicles, where the writer, in giving the genealogy of the descendants of David, mentions *Zedekiah*; and it was in the time of *Zedekiah* that Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, 588 years before Christ, and consequently more than 860 years after Moses. Those who have superstitiously boasted of the antiquity of the Bible, and particularly of the books ascribed to Moses, have done it without examination, and without any other authority than that of one credulous man telling it to another; for, so far as historical and chronological evidence applies, the very first book in the Bible is not so ancient as the book of Homer, by more than three hundred years, and is about the same age with Æsop's Fables.

I am not contending for the morality of Homer; on the contrary, I think it to be a book of false glory, and tending to inspire immoral and mischievous notions of honour; and with respect to Æsop, though the moral is in general just, the fable is often cruel; and the cruelty of the fable does more injury

to the heart, especially in a child, than the moral does good to the judgment.

Having now dismissed Kings and Chronicles, I come to the next in course, the book of Ezra.

As one proof among others I shall produce to shew the disorder in which this pretended word of God, the Bible, has been put together, and the uncertainty of who the authors were, we have only to look at the three first verses in Ezra, and the two last in Chronicles; for by what kind of cutting and shuffling has it been, that the three first verses in Ezra should be the two last verses in Chronicles, or that the two last in Chronicles, should be the three first in Ezra? Either the authors did not know their own works, or the compilers did not know the authors.

Two last verses of Chronicles.

Ver. 22. Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord, spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and put it also into writing, saying,

23 Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem which, is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up. ☞

Three first verses of Ezra.

Ver. 1. Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also into writing, saying.

2. Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem.

☞ The last verse in Chronicles is broken abruptly, and ends in the middle of a phrase with the word *up*, without signifying to what place. This abrupt break, and the appearance of the same verses in different books, shew, as I have already said, the

the disorder and ignorance in which the Bible has been put together, and that the compilers of it had no authority for what they were doing, nor we any authority for believing what they have done*.

The only thing that has any appearance of certainty in the book of Ezra, is the time in which it was written, which was immediately after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, about 536 years before Christ. Ezra (who according to the Jewish commentators, is the same person as is called Eldras in the Apocrypha) was one of the persons who returned and who, it is probable, wrote the account of that affair. Nehemiah, whose books follow next to Ezra, was another of the returned persons; and who, it is also probable, wrote the account of the same affair, in the book that bears his name. But those accounts are nothing to us, nor to any other person, unless it be to the Jews, as a part of the history of their nation: and there is just as much of the word of God in those books, as there is in any of the histories of France, or Rapin's History of England, or the history of any other country.

* I observed, as I passed along, several broken and senseless passages in the Bible, without thinking them of consequence enough to be introduced in the body of the work; such as that, 1 Samuel, chap. xiii. ver. 1. where it is said, "Saul reigned *one year*; and when he had reigned *two* years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men, &c." The first part of the verse, that Saul reigned *one year*, has no sense, since it does not tell us what Saul did, nor say any thing of what happened at the end of that *one year*; and it is besides, mere absurdity to say he reigned *one year*, when the very next phrase says he had reigned *two*; for if he had reigned *two*, it was impossible not to have reigned *one*.

Another instance occurs in Joshua, chap. v. where the writer tells us a story of an angel (for such the table of contents, at the head of the chapter, calls him) appearing unto Joshua; and the story ends abruptly, and without any conclusion. The story is as follows:—Ver. 13, "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lift up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over-against him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" Verse 14, "And he said, Nay; but as captain of the hosts of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, *What saith my Lord unto his servant?*" Ver. 15, "And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."—And what then? nothing: for here the story ends, and the chapter too.

Either this story is broken off in the middle, or it is a story told by some Jewish humourist, in ridicule of Joshua's pretended mission from God; and the compilers of the Bible, not perceiving the design of the story, has told it as a serious matter. As a story of humour and ridicule, it has a great deal of point; for it pompously introduces an angel in the figure of a man, with a drawn sword in his hand, before whom Joshua *falls on his face to the earth, and worships* (which is contrary to their second commandment;) and then, this most important embassy from heaven ends, in telling Joshua to *pull off his shoe*. It might as well have told him to pull up his breeches.

It is certain, however, that the Jews did not credit every thing their leaders told them; as appears from the cavalier manner in which they speak of Moses, when he was gone into the mount. "As for *this* Moses, say they, *we wot not what is become of him.*" Exod. chap. x. xxiii. ver. 1.

But even in matters of historical record, neither of those writers are to be depended upon. In the second chapter of Ezra, the writer gives a list of the tribes and families, and of the precise number of souls of each that returned from Babylon to Jerusalem; and this enrolment of the persons so returned, appears to have been one of the principal objects for writing the book; but in this there is an error that destroys the intention of the undertaking.

The writer begins his enrolment in the following manner : Chap. ii. ver. 3, " The children of Parosh, two thousand one hundred seventy and four." Verse 4, " The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two." And in this manner he proceeds through all the families ; and in the 64th verse, he makes a total and says, the whole congregation together was *forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.*

But whoever will take the trouble of casting up the several particulars; will find that the total is but 29,818; so that the error is 12,542*. What certainty then can there be in the Bible for any thing? -

Nehemiah, in like manner, gives a list of the returned families, and of the number of each family. He begins as in Ezra, by saying, chap vii. ver. 8. "The children of Parosh, two thousand three hundred and seventy two;" and so on through all the families. This list differs in several of the particulars from that of Ezra. In the 66th verse, Nehemiah makes a total, and says, as Ezra had said, "The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore." But the particulars of this list make a total but of 31,089, so that the error here is 11271. These writers may do well enough for Bible makers, but not for any thing where truth and exactness is necessary.

The next book in course is the book of Esther. If Madam Esther thought it any honour to offer herself as a kept mistress

* Particulars of the families from the second chapter of Ezra.

Chap. ii		Bt. forward 11,577		Bt. forward 15,783		Bt. forward 19,444	
Ver. 3	2172	Ver. 13	666	Ver. 23	128	Ver. 33	725
4	372	14	2056	24	42	34	345
5	775	15	454	25	143	35	3630
6	2812	16	98	26	621	36	973
7	1254	17	323	27	122	37	1052
8	945	18	112	28	223	38	1247
9	760	19	223	29	52	39	1017
10	642	20	95	30	156	40	74
11	623	21	123	31	1254	41	128
12	1222	22	56	32	320	42	139
						58	392
						60	652
<hr/> 11,577		<hr/> 15,783		<hr/> 19,444		<hr/> Total 29,818	

to Ahasuerus, or as a rival to queen Vashty, who had refused to come to a drunken king, in the midst of a drunken company, to be made a shew of, (for the account says they had been drinking seven days, and were merry,) let Ester and Mordecai look to that, it is no business of our's, at least it is none of mine besides which, the story has a great deal the appearance of being fabulous and is also anonymous. I pass on to the book of Job.

The book of Job differs in character from all the books we have hitherto passed over. Treachery and murder make no part of this book; it is the meditations of a mind strongly impressed with the vicissitudes of human life, and by turns sinking under, and struggling against the pressure. It is a highly wrought composition, between willing submission and involuntary discontent; and shews man, as he sometimes is, more disposed to be resigned than he is capable of being. Patience has but a small share in the character of the person of whom the book treats; on the contrary, his grief is often impetuous; but he still endeavours to keep a guard upon it, and seems determined, in the midst of accumulating ills, to impose upon himself the hard duty of contentment.

I have spoken in a respectful manner of the book of Job in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, but without knowing at that time what I have learned since; which is, that from all the evidence that can be collected, the book of Job does not belong to the Bible.

I have seen the opinion of two Hebrew commentators, Abenezra and Spinosa, upon this subject; they both say that the book of Job carries no internal evidence of being an Hebrew book; that the genius of the composition, and the drama of the piece, are not Hebrew; that it has been translated from another language into Hebrew, and that the author of the book was a Gentile; that the character represented under the name of Satan (which is the first and only time this name is mentioned in the Bible) does not correspond to any Hebrew idea; and that the two convocations which the Deity is supposed to have made of those, whom the poem calls sons of God and the familiarity which this supposed Satan is stated to have with the Deity, are in the same case.

It may also be observed, that the book shews itself to be the production of a mind cultivated in science, which the Jews, so far from being famous for, were very ignorant of. The allusions to objects of natural philosophy are frequent and strong, and are of a different cast to any thing in the books known to be Hebrew. The astronomical names Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus, are Greek, and not Hebrew names; and as it does
not

not appear from any thing that is to be found in the Bible, that the Jews knew any thing of astronomy, or that they studied it, they had no translation of those names into their own language, but adopted the names as they found them in the poem.

That they Jews did translate the literary productions of the Gentile nations into the Hebrew language, and mix them with their own, is not a matter of doubt; the thirty first chapter of Proverbs is an evidence of this: it is there said, ver. 1, *The word of king Lemuel, the prophecy which his mother taught him.* This verse stands as a preface to the proverbs that follow, and which are not the proverbs of Solomon, but of Lemuel; and this Lemuel was not one of the Kings of Israel, nor of Judah, but of some other country, and consequently a Gentile. The Jews, however, have adopted his proverbs, and as they cannot give any account who the author of the book of Job was, nor how they came by the book; and as it differs in character from the Hebrew writings, and stands totally unconnected with every other book and chapter in the Bible before it, and after it, it has all the circumstantial evidence of being originally a book of the Gentiles*.

The Bible-makers, and those regulators of time, the Bible chronologists, appear to have been at a loss where to place, and how to dispose of the book of Job; for it contains no one historical circumstance, nor allusion to any, that might serve to determine its place in the Bible. But it would not have answered the purpose of these men to have informed the world of their ignorance; and therefore they have affixed it to the æra of 1520 years before Christ, which is during the time the Israelites were in Egypt, and for which they have just as much authority and no more than I should have for saying it was a thousand years before that period. The probability, however,

* The prayer known by the name of *Augur's prayer*, in the 30th chapter of Proverbs, immediately preceding the proverbs of Lemuel, and which is the only sensible, well-conceived, and well-expressed prayer in the Bible, has much the appearance of being a prayer taken from the Gentiles. The name of Agur occurs on no other occasion than this; and he is introduced, together with the prayer ascribed to him, in the same manner, and nearly in the same words, that Lemuel and his proverbs are introduced in the chapter that follows. The first verse of the 30th chapter says, "The words of Augur, the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy;" here the word prophecy is used with the same application it has in the following chapter of Lemuel, unconnected with any thing of prediction. The prayer of Augur is in the 8th and 9th verses, "Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither riches nor poverty, but feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." This has not any of the marks of being a Jewish prayer; for the Jews never prayed but when they were in trouble, and never for any thing but victory, vengeance, and riches.

is, that it is older than any book in the Bible; and it is the only one that can be read without indignation or disgust.

We know nothing of what the antient gentile world (as it is called) was before the time of the Jews, whose practice has been to calumniate and blacken the character of all other nations; and it is from the Jewish accounts that we have learned to call them heathens. But as far as we know to the contrary, they were a just and moral people, and not addicted, like the Jews, to cruelty and revenge, but of whose profession of faith we are unacquainted. It appears to have been their custom to personify both virtue and vice, by statutes and images as is done now-a-days both by statuary and by painting; but it does not follow from this, that they worshipped them any more than we do. I pass on to the book of

Psalms, of which it is not necessary to make much observation. Some of them are moral, and others are very revengeful, and the greater part relates to certain local circumstances of the Jewish nation at the time they were written, with which we have nothing to do. It is however, an error or an imposition, to call them the *Psalms of David*: they are a collection, as song-books are now-a-days, from different song-writers, who lived at different times. The 137th Psalm could not have been written till more than four hundred years after the time of David, because it is written in commemoration of an event, the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, which did not happen till that distance of time. "*By the rivers of Babylon we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows, in the midst thereof; for there they that carried us away captive, required of us a song, saying, sing us one of the songs of Zion.*" As a man would say to an American, or to a Frenchman, or to an Englishman, sing us one of your American songs, or your French songs, or your English songs. This remark with respect to the time this psalm was written, is of no other use than to shew (among others already mentioned) the general imposition the world has been under, with respect to the authors of the Bible. No regard has been paid to time, place, and circumstance; and the names of persons have been affixed to the several books, which it was as impossible they should write, as that a man should walk in procession at is own funeral.

The book of proverbs. These like the *Psalms*, are a collection, and that from authors belonging to other nations than those of the Jewish nation, as I have shewn in the observations upon the book of *Job*: besides which, some of the proverbs ascribed to Solomon, did not appear till two hundred and fifty years after the death of Solomon; for it is said in the first
verse

verse of the 25th chapter, "*These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah copied out.*" It was two hundred and fifty years from the time of Solomon, to the time of Hezekiah. When a man is famous, and his name is abroad, he is made the putative father of things he never said or did; and this, most probably has been the case with Solomon. It appears to have been the fashion of that day to make proverbs, as it is now to make jest-books, and father them upon those who never saw them.

The book of *Ecclesiastes*, or the *Preacher*, is also ascribed to Solomon, and that with much reason, if not with truth. It is written as the solitary reflections of a worn out debauchee, such as Solomon was, who looking back on scenes he can no longer enjoy, cries out, *All is vanity!* A great deal of the metaphor and of the sentiment is obscure, most probably by translation; but enough is left to shew they were strongly pointed in the original*. From what is transmitted to us of the character makers and the chronologists should have managed this matter of Solomon, he was witty, ostentatious, dissolute, and at last melancholy. He lived fast, and died, tired of the world, at the age of fifty-eight years.

Seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, are worse than none; and however it may carry with it the appearance of heightened enjoyment, it defeats all the felicity of affection, by leaving it no point to fix upon; divided love is never happy. This was the case with Solomon; and if he could not, with all his pretensions to wisdom, discover it beforehand, he merited, unpitied, the mortification he afterwards endured. In this point of view, his preaching is unnecessary, because, to know the consequences, it is only necessary to know the cause. Seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, would have stood in place of the whole book. It was needless after this to say, that all was vanity and vexation of spirit; for it is impossible to derive happiness from the company of those whom we deprive of happiness.

To be happy in old age, it is necessary that we accustom ourselves to objects that can accompany the mind all the way through life, and that we take the rest as good in their day. The mere man of pleasure is miserable in old age; and the mere drudge in business is but little better: whereas, natural philosophy, mathematical and mechanical science, are a continual source of tranquil pleasure, and in spite of the gloomy dogma of priests, and of superstition, the study of those things is the study of the true theology; it teaches man to know and to admire the Creator, for the principles of science are in the creation, and are unchangeable, and of divine origin.

* *Those that look out of the window shall be darkened*, is an obscure figure in translation for loss of sight.

Those who knew Benjamin Franklin, will recollect, that his mind was ever young; his temper ever serene; science, that never grows grey, was always his mistress. He was never without an object, for when we cease to have an object, we become like an invalid in an hospital waiting for death.

Solomon's Songs, amorous and foolish enough, but which wrinkled fanaticism has called divine. The compilers of the Bible have placed these songs after the book of Ecclesiastes; and the chronologists have affixed to them the æra of 1014 years before Christ, at which time Solomon, according to the same chronology, was nineteen years of age, and was then forming his seraglio of wives and concubines. The Bible-makers and the chronologists should have managed this matter a little better, and either have said nothing about the time, or chosen a time less inconsistent with the supposed divinity of those songs; for Solomon was then in the honey-moon of one thousand debaucheries.

It should also have occurred to them, that as he wrote, if he did write, the book of Ecclesiastes, long after these songs, and in which he exclaims, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit; that he included those songs in that description. This is the more probable, because he says, or somebody for him, Ecclesiastes, chap. ii. ver. 8, "*I got me men singers, and women singers, (most probably to sing those songs) and musical instruments of all sorts; and behold (ver. 11) all was vanity and vexation of spirit.*" The compilers, however, have done their work but by halves; for as they have given us the songs, they should have given us the tunes, that we might sing them.

The books, called the books of the Prophets, fill up all the remaining part of the Bible; they are sixteen in number, beginning with Isaiah, and ending with Malachi, of which I have given a list, in the observations upon Chronicles. Of these sixteen prophets, all of whom, except the three last, lived within the time the books of Kings and Chronicles were written; two only, Isaiah and Jeremiah, are mentioned in the history of those books. I shall begin with those two, reserving what I have to say on the general character of the men called prophets, to another part of the work.

Whoever will take the trouble of reading the book ascribed to Isaiah, will find it one of the most wild and disorderly compositions ever put together; it has neither beginning, middle, nor end; and except a short historical part, and a few sketches of history in two or three of the first chapters, is one continued incoherent, bombastical rant, full of extravagant metaphor, without application, and destitute of meaning; a school-boy would scarcely have been excusable for writing such stuff;

it is (at least in translation) that kind of composition and false taste that is properly called prose run mad.

The historical part begins at the 36th chapter, and is continued to the end of the 39th chapter. It relates some matters that are said to have passed during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, at which time Isaiah lived. This fragment of history begins and ends abruptly; it has not the least connection with the chapter that precedes it, nor with that which follows it, nor with any other in the book. It is probable, that Isaiah wrote this fragment himself, because he was an actor in the circumstances it treats of; but except this part, there are scarcely two chapters that have any connection with each other; one is entitled, at the beginning of the first verse, the burden of Babylon; another, the burden of Moab; another the burden of Damascus; another, the burden of Egypt; another, the burden of the Desert of the Sea; another, the burden of the Valley of Vision; as you would say, the story of the knight of the burning mountain, the story of Cinderella, or the glassen slipper; the story of the sleeping beauty in the wood, &c. &c.

I have already shewn in the instance of the two last verses of Chronicles, and the three first in Ezra, that the compilers of the Bible mixed and confounded the writings of different authors with each other; which alone, were there no other cause, is sufficient to destroy the authenticity of any compilation, because it is more than presumptive evidence, that the compilers are ignorant who the authors were. A very glaring instance of this occurs in the book ascribed to Isaiah: the latter part of the 44th chapter, and the beginning of the 45th, so far from having been written by Isaiah, could only have been written by some person, who lived at least an hundred and fifty years after Isaiah was dead.

These chapters are a compliment to Cyrus, who permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity, to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, as is stated in Ezra. The last verse of the 44th chapter, and the beginning of the 45th, are in the following words: "*That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple, thy foundations shall be laid, thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, &c.*"

What audacity of church, and priestly ignorance, it is to impose this book upon the world, as the writing of Isaiah! when Isaiah, according to their own chronology, died soon after the death of Hezekiah, which was six hundred and ninety

ninety-eight years before Christ; and the decree of Cyrus, in favour of the Jews returning to Jerusalem, was, according to the same chronology, 536 years before Christ: which is a distance of time, between the two, of one hundred and sixty-two years. I do not suppose, that the compilers of the Bible made these books; but rather that they picked up some loose, anonymous essays, and put them together, under the names of such authors, as best suited their purpose. They have encouraged the imposition, which is next to inventing it; for it was impossible but they must have observed it.

When we see the studied craft of the scripture-makers, in making every part of this romantic book of school-boy's eloquence, bend to the monstrous idea of a Son of God, begotten by a ghost on the body of a virgin, there is no imposition; we are not justified in suspecting them of. Every phrase and circumstance are marked with the barbarous hand of superstitious torture, and forced into meanings, it was impossible they could have. The head of every chapter, and the top of every page are blazoned with the names of Christ and the church; that the unwary reader might suck in the error before he began to read.

Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, Isaiah, chap. vii. ver. 14, has been interpreted to mean the person called Jesus Christ, and his mother Mary, and has been echoed through christendom for more than a thousand years; and such has been the rage of this opinion, that scarcely a spot in it but has been stained with blood, and marked with desolation, in consequence of it. Though it is not my intention to enter into controversy on subjects of this kind, but to confine myself to shew that the Bible is spurious; and thus, by taking away the foundation, to overthrow at once the whole structure of superstition raised thereon; I will, however, stop a moment to expose the fallacious application of this passage.

Whether Isaiah was playing a trick with Ahaz, king of Judah, to whom this passage is spoken, is no business of mine; I mean only to shew the misapplication of the passage, and that it has no more reference to Christ and his mother, than it has to me and my mother. The story is simply this:

The king of Syria and the king of Israel (I have already mentioned, that the Jews were split into two nations, one of which was called Judah, the capital of which was Jerusalem, and the other Israel) made war jointly against Ahaz, king of Judah, and marched their armies towards Jerusalem. Ahaz and his people became alarmed, and the account says, ver. 2, "*Their hearts were moved, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.*"

In this situation of things, Isaiah addresses himself to Ahaz, and assures him in the *name of the Lord*, (the cant phrase of all the prophets,) that these two kings should not succeed against him; and to satisfy Ahaz that this should be the case, tells him to ask a sign. This, the account says, Ahaz declined doing giving as a reason, that he would not tempt the Lord; upon which, Isaiah, who is the speaker, says, ver. 14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, *behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*; and the 16th verse says, "*And before this child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land which thou abhorrest or darest* (meaning Syria and the kingdom of Israel) *shall be forsaken of both her kings.*" Here then was the sign, and the time limited for the completion of the assurance or promise, namely, before this child should know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

Isaiah having committed himself thus far, it became necessary to him, in order to avoid the imputation of being a false prophet, and the consequences thereof, to take measures to make this sign appear. It certainly was not a difficult thing, in any time of the world, to find a girl with child, or to make her so; and perhaps, Isaiah knew of one before-hand; for I do not suppose that the prophets of that day were any more to be trusted, than the priests of this: be that however as it may, he says in the next chapter, ver. 2, "And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, and *I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son.*"

Here then is the whole story, foolish as it is, of this child, and this virgin; and it is upon the barefaced perversion of this story, that the book of Matthew, and the impudence, and far-did interest of priests in later times, have founded a theory, which they call the gospel, and have applied this story to signify the person they call Jesus Christ; begotten, they say, by a ghost, whom they call holy, on the body of a woman, engaged in marriage, and afterwards married, whom they call a virgin seven hundred years after this foolish story was told; a theory, which, speaking for myself, I hesitate not to believe, and to say, is as fabulous, and as false as God is true*.

But to shew the imposition and falshood of Isaiah, we have only to attend to the sequel of this story; which, though it is passed over in silence in the book of Isaiah, is related in the 28th chapter of 2 Chronicles; and which is, that instead of

* In the 14th verse of the viith chapter, it is said, that the child should be called Immanuel; but this name was not given to either of the children, otherwise than as a character, which the word signifies. That of the prophetess was called Maher-shalal-hash-baz; and that of Mary was called Jesus.

these two kings failing in their attempt against Ahaz, king of Judah, as Isaiah had pretended to foretel in the name of the Lord, they *succeeded*; Ahaz was defeated and destroyed; an hundred and twenty thousand of his people were slaughtered; Jerusalem was plundered, and two hundred thousand women, and sons and daughters, carried into captivity. Thus much for this lying prophet and impostor Isaiah, and the book of falsehoods that bears his name. I pass on to the book of

Jeremiah. This prophet, as he is called, lived in the time that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, in the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah; and the suspicion was strong against him, that he was a traitor in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar. Every thing relating to Jeremiah shews him to have been a man of an equivocal character; in his metaphor of the potter and the clay, chap xviii. he guards his prognostications in such a crafty manner, as always to leave himself a door to escape by, in case the event should be contrary to what he had predicted.

In the 7th and 8th verses of that chapter, he makes the Almighty to say, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and destroy it, if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent me of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Here was a proviso against one side of the case: now for the other side.

Verse 9 and 10, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice; then *I will repent me of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.*" Here is a proviso against the other side; and according to this plan of prophesying, a prophet could never be wrong, however mistaken the Almighty might be. This sort of absurd subterfuge, and this manner of speaking of the Almighty, as one would speak of a man, is consistent with nothing but the stupidity of the Bible.

As to the authenticity of the book, it is only necessary to read it in order to decide positively, that, though some passages recorded therein may have been spoken by Jeremiah, he is not the author of the book. The historical parts, if they can be called by that name, are in the most confused condition; the same events are several times repeated, and that in a manner different, and sometimes in contradiction to each other; and this disorder runs even to the last chapter, where the history upon which the greater part of the book has been employed, begins a-new, and ends abruptly. The book has all the appearance of being a medley of unconnected anecdotes, respecting persons

and

and things of that time, collected together in the same rude manner, as if the various and contradictory accounts, that are to be found in a bundle of newspapers, respecting persons and things of the present day, were put together without date, order, or explanation. I will give two or three examples of this kind.

It appears from the account of the 37th chapter, that the army of Nebuchadnezzar, which is called the army of the Chaldeans, had besieged Jerusalem some time; and on their hearing that the army of Pharaoh, of Egypt, was marching against them they raised the siege, and retreated for a time. It may here be proper to mention, in order to understand this confused history, that Nebuchadnezzar had besieged and taken Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoiakim, the predecessor of Zedekiah; and that it was Nebuchadnezzar who had made Zedekiah king, or rather vice-roy; and that this second siege, of which the book of Jeremiah treats, was in consequence of the revolt of Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar. This will, in some measure, account for the suspicion that affixes itself to Jeremiah, of being a traitor, and in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar; whom Jeremiah calls in the 43d chapter, ver. 10, the servant of God.

The 11th verse of this chapter (the 37th) says, "And it came to pass, that, when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem, for fear of Pharaoh's army, that Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem, to go (as this account states) into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people; and when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, *Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans*: then Jeremiah said, *It is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans*. Jeremiah being thus stoppt and accused, was, after being examined, committed to prison, on suspicion of being a traitor, where he remained, as is stated in the last verse of this chapter.

But the next chapter gives an account of the imprisonment of Jeremiah, which has no connection with *this* account; but ascribes his imprisonment to another circumstance, and for which we must go back to the 21st chapter. It is there stated, verse 1, that Zedekiah sent Pashur, the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah the priest, to Jeremiah to enquire of him concerning Nebuchadnezzar, whose army was then before Jerusalem: and Jeremiah said to them, verse 8, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death: he that abideth in this city, shall die by the sword and by the famine, and by the pestilence; *but*

he

he that goeth out and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey."

This interview and conference breaks off abruptly at the end of the 10th verse of the 21st chapter; and such is the disorder of this book, that we have to pass over sixteen chapters upon various subjects, in order to come at the continuation and event of this conference; and this brings us to the 1st verse of the 38th chapter, as I have just mentioned.

The 38th chapter opens with saying, "Then Shephatiah, the son of Mattan; and Gedaliah, the son of Pashur; and Jucal, the son of Shelemiah; and Pashur, the son of Melchiah; (here are more persons mentioned than in the 21st chapter) heard the words that Jeremiah spoke unto the people, saying, *"Thus saith the Lord, He that remaineth in this city, shall die by the sword, by famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans, shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live;* (which are the words of the conference;) therefore, (say they to Zedekiah,) We beseech thee, let this man be put to death; *for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people in speaking such words unto them; for this man seeketh not the welfare of the people, but the hurt:"* and at the 6th verse, it is said, "Then they took Jeremiah, and put him into the dungeon of Melchiah."

These two accounts are different and contradictory. The one ascribes his imprisonment to his attempt to *escape out of the city*; the other, to his *preaching and prophesying in the city*: the one to his being seized by the guard at the gate; the other, to his being accused before Zedekiah, by the conferees*.

In

* I observed two chapters, 16th and 17th, in the first book of Samuel, that contradict each other with respect to David, and the manner he became acquainted with Saul; as the 37th and 38th chapters of the book of Jeremiah contradict each other with respect to the cause of Jeremiah's imprisonment.

In the 16th chapter of Samuel, it is said, that an evil spirit of God troubled Saul, and that his servants advised him (as a remedy) "to seek out a man, who was a cunning player upon the harp:" and Saul said, verse 17, "Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me." Then answered one of his servants and said, Behold I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him: wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, "Send me David, thy son." And (verse 21) David came to Saul, and stood before him, and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer; and when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, (verse 23) David took his harp, and played with his hand, and Saul was refreshed, and was well."

But the next chapter (17th) gives an account, all different to this, of the manner that Saul and David became acquainted. Here it is ascribed to David's encounter with Goliath, when David was sent by his father to carry provision to his brethren in the camp. In the 55th verse of this chapter, it is said "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine (Goliath), he said to Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said inquire thou whose son the stripling is.

And

In the next chapter (the 39th) we have another instance of the disordered state of this book; for notwithstanding the siege of the city, by Nebuchadnezzar, has been the subject of several of the preceding chapters, particularly the 37th and 38th, the 39th chapter begins as if not a word had been said upon the subject; and as the reader was still to be informed of every particular respecting it; for it begins with saying, verse 1st, *“ In the ninth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and all his army against Jerusalem, and besieged it, &c. &c.”*

But the instance in the last chapter (the 52) is still more glaring; for though the story has been told over and over again, this chapter still supposes the reader not to know any thing of it; for it begins by saying, verse 1st, *Zedekiah was one and twenty years old, when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah, of Libnath. (Ver 4.) and it came to pass, in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it, &c. &c.*

It is not possible that any one man, and more particularly Jeremiah, could have been the writer of this book. The errors are such, as could not have been committed by any person sitting down to compose a work. Were I, or any other man, to write in such a disordered manner, no body would read what was written; and every body would suppose that the writer was in a state of insanity. The only way therefore to account for the disorder is, that the book is a medley of detached unauthenticated anecdotes, put together by some stupid book-maker, under the name of Jeremiah; because many of them refer to him, and to the circumstances of the times he lived in.

Of the duplicity, and of the false predictions of Jeremiah, I shall mention two instances; and then proceed to review the remainder of the Bible.

It appears from the 38th chapter, that when Jeremiah was in prison, Zedekiah sent for him; and at this interview, which was private, Jeremiah pressed it strongly on Zedekiah to surrender himself to the enemy. *“ If,”* says he, verse 17, *thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then*

And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand; and Saul said unto him, *Whose son art thou, thou young man?* And David answered, *I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.* These two accounts belie each other, because each of them supposes Saul and David not to have known each other before. This book, the Bible, is too ridiculous even for criticism.

thy soul shall live, &c." Zedekiah was apprehensive, that what passed at this conference should be known; and he said to Jeremiah, verse 25, "If the prince's (meaning those of Judah) near, that I have talked with thee; and they come unto thee and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king; hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; and also what the king said unto thee: then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king; that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there. Then came all the prince's unto Jeremiah, and asked him; and *he told them according to all the words the king had commanded.*" Thus, this man of God, as he is called, could tell a lie, or very strongly prevaricate, when he supposed it would answer his purpose: for certainly he did not go to Zedekiah, to make this supplication; neither did he make it: he went, because he was sent for; and he employed that opportunity, to advise Zedekiah to surrender himself to Nebuchadnezzar.

In the 34th chapter is a prophecy of Jeremiah to Zedekiah, in these words, ver. 2. "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire; and thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon; and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon. *Yet hear the word of the Lord; O Zedekiah, king of Judah, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not die by the sword, but thou shalt die in peace; and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings that were before thee, so shall they burn odours for thee, and they will lament thee, saying, Ah, Lord; for I have pronounced the word, saith the Lord.*"

Now, instead of Zedekiah beholding the eyes of the king of Babylon, and speaking with him mouth to mouth, and dying in peace, and with the burning of odours, as at the funeral of his fathers (as Jeremiah had declared, the Lord himself had pronounced), the reverse, according to the 52d chapter, was the case: it is there said, ver. 10, "That the king of Babylon, slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death." What then can we say of these prophets, but that they are impostors and liars?

As for Jeremiah, he experienced none of those evils. He was taken into favour by Nebuchadnezzar, who gave him in charge to the captain of the guard, chap. xxxix. ver. 12, "Take him (said he), and look well to him, and do him no

harm ; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee." Jeremiah joined himself afterwards to Nebuchadnezzar, and went about prophesying for him against the Egyptians, who had marched to the relief of Jerusalem while it was besieged. Thus much for another of the lying prophets, and the book that bears his name.

I have been the more particular in treating of the books ascribed to Isaiah and Jeremiah, because those two are spoken of in the books of Kings and of Chronicles, which the others are not. The remainder of the books ascribed to the men called prophets, I shall not trouble myself much about, but take them collectively into the observations I shall offer on the character of the men stiled prophets.

In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have said that the word prophet was the Bible-word for poet, and that the flights and metaphors of the Jewish poets have been foolishly erected into what are now called prophecies. I am sufficiently justified in this opinion, not only because the books called the prophecies are written in poetical language, but because there is no word in the Bible, except it be the word prophet, that describes what we mean by a poet. I have also said, that the word signified a performer upon musical instruments, of which I have given some instances ; such as that of a company of prophets, prophesying with psalteries, with tabrets, with pipes, with harps, &c. and that Saul prophesied with them, 1 Sam. chap. x. ver. 5. It appears from this passage, and from other parts in the book of Samuel, that the word prophet was confined to signify poetry and music ; for the person, who was supposed to have a visionary insight into concealed things, was not a prophet, but a *seer**, 1 Sam. chap. ix. ver. 9 ; and it was not till after the word *seer* went out of use, (which most probably was, when Saul banished those he called wizards), that the profession of the seer, or the art of seeing, became incorporated into the word prophet.

According to the *modern* meaning of the word prophet and prophesying, it signifies foretelling events to a great distance of time ; and it became necessary to the inventors of the gospel to give it this latitude of meaning, in order to apply, or to stretch what they call the prophecies of the Old Testament, to the times of the New. But according to the Old Testament, the prophesying of the seer, and afterwards of the prophet, so

* I know not what is the Hebrew word that corresponds to the word seer in English ; but I observe it is translated into French by *La Voyant*, from the verb *voir* to see, and which means the person who sees, or the seer.

far as the meaning of the word *seer* was incorporated into that of prophet, had reference only to things of the time then passing, or very closely connected with it; such as the event of a battle they were going to engage in, or of a journey, or of any enterprize they were going to undertake, or of any circumstance then pending, or of any difficulty they were then in; all of which had immediate reference to themselves, (as in the case already mentioned of Ahaz and Isaiah with respect to the expression, (*Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,*) and not to any distant future time. It was that kind of prophesying, that corresponds to what we call fortune-telling; such as casting nativities, predicting riches, fortunate or unfortunate marriages, conjuring for lost goods, &c. and it is the fraud of the Christian church, not that of the Jews, and the ignorance and the superstition of modern, not that of ancient times, that elevated those poetical — musical — conjuring — dreaming — strolling gentry, into the rank they have since had.

But besides this general character of all the prophets, they had also a particular character. They were in parties, and they prophesied for, or against, according to the party they were with, as the poetical and political writers of the present day write in defence of the party they associate with, against the other.

After the Jews were divided into two nations, that of Judah and that of Israel, each party had it's prophets, who abused and accused each other of being false prophets, lying prophets, impostors, &c.

The prophets of the party of Judah prophesied against the prophets of the party of Israel; and those of the party of Israel against those of Judah. This party prophesying shewed itself immediately on the separation under the first two rival kings Rehoboam and Jeroboam. The prophet that cursed, or prophesied against the altar that Jeroboam had built in Bethel, was of the party of Judah, where Rehoboam was king; and he was way-laid on his return home by a prophet of the party of Israel, who said unto him, (1 Kings, chap. x,) "*Art thou the man of God that came from Judah?*" and he said, *I am.*" Then the prophet of the party of Israel said to him, "*I am a prophet also as thou art, (signifying of Judah) and an Angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee unto thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water: but, says the 18th verse, he lied unto him.*" The event, however, according to the story, is, that the prophet of Judah never got back to Judah; for he was found dead on the road by the contrivance of the prophet of Israel, who no doubt was called a true prophet by his own party, and the prophet of Judah a lying prophet.

In the third chapter of the second of kings, a story is related of prophesying, or conjuring, that shews, in several particulars, the character of a prophet. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and Joram king of Israel, had for a while ceased their party animosity, and entered into an alliance; and those two, together with the king of Edom, engaged in a war against the king of Moab. After uniting, and marching their armies, the story says, they were in great distress for water, upon which Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him? and one of the servants of the king of Israel said, here is Elisha.* (Elisha was of the party of Judah.) *And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah said, The word of the Lord is with him.*" The story then says, that these three kings went down to Elisha; and when Elisha (who, as I have said, was a Judahmite prophet) saw the king of Israel, he said unto him, "*What have I to do with thee, get thee to the prophets of thy father, and the prophets of thy mother. Nay, but said the king of Israel, the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of the king of Moab,*" (meaning, because of the distress they were in for water); upon which Elisha said, "*As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, I would not look towards thee, nor see thee.*" Here is all the venom and vulgarity of a party prophet. We have now to see the performance or manner of prophesying.

Ver. 15, *Bring me,* said Elisha, *a minstrel; and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.*" Here is the farce of the conjurer. Now for the prophecy: "*And Elisha said,* (singing, most probably, to the tune he was playing,) *Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches,*" which was just telling them what every countryman could have told them, without either fiddle or farce, that the way to get water was to dig for it.

But as every conjuror is not famous alike for the same thing, so neither were those prophets; for though all of them at least those I have spoken of, were famous for lying, some of them excelled in cursing. Elisha, whom I have just mentioned, was a chief in this branch of prophesying: it was he that cursed the forty-two children in the name of the Lord, whom the two she-bears came and devoured. We are to suppose that those children were of the party of Israel; but as those who will curse will lie, there is just as much credit to be given to this story of Elisha's two she-bears, as there is to that of the dragon of Wantley, of whom it is said,

Poor

Poor children three devoured he,
 That could not with him grapple;
 And at one sup he eat them up,
 As a man would eat an apple.

There were another description of men called prophets, that amused themselves with dreams and visions; but whether by night or by day we know not. These, if they were not quite harmless, were but little mischievous. Of this class are

EZEKIEL and DANIEL; and the first question upon those books, as upon all the others, is, Are they genuine? that is, were they written by Ezekiel and Daniel?

Of this there is no proof; but so far as my own opinion goes, I am more inclined to believe they were, than that they were not. My reasons for this opinion are as follow: First, Because those books do not contain internal evidence, to prove they were not written by Ezekiel and Daniel, as the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, Samuel, &c. &c. prove they were not written by Moses, Joshua, Samuel, &c. &c.

Secondly, Because they were not written till after the Babylonish captivity began; and there is good reason to believe, that not any book in the bible was written before that period: at least it is proveable, from the books themselves, as I have already shewn, that they were not written till after the commencement of the Jewish monarchy.

Thirdly, Because the manner in which the books ascribed to Ezekiel and Daniel are written, agrees with the condition these men were in at the time of writing them.

Had the numerous commentators and priests, who have foolishly employed or wasted their time in pretending to expound and unriddle those books, been carried into captivity, as Ezekiel and Daniel were, it would greatly have improved their intellects, in comprehending the reason for this mode of writing, and have saved them the trouble of racking their invention, as they have done to no purpose; for they would have found that themselves would be obliged to write whatever they had to write, respecting their own affairs, or those of their friends, or of their country, in a concealed manner, as those men have done.

These two books differ from all the rest; for it is only these that are filled with accounts of dreams and visions; and this difference arose from the situation the writers were in, as prisoners of war, or prisoners of state, in a foreign country, which obliged them to convey even the most trifling information to each other, and all their political projects or opinions, in obscure and metaphorical terms. They pretend to have dreamed dreams, and seen visions, because it was unsafe for them to speak facts or plain language. We ought, however, to suppose,

pose, that the persons to whom they wrote understood what they meant, and that it was not intended any body else should. But these busy commentators and priests have been puzzling their wits to find out what it was not intended they should know, and with which they have nothing to do.

Ezekiel and Daniel were carried prisoners to Babylon, under the first captivity, in the time of Jehoiakim, nine years before the second captivity in the time of Zedekiah. The Jews were then still numerous, and had considerable force at Jerusalem; and as it is natural to suppose, that men in the situation of Ezekiel and Daniel, would be meditating the recovery of their country, and their own deliverance, it is reasonable to suppose, that the accounts of dreams and visions, with which these books are filled, are no other than a disguised mode of correspondence, to facilitate those objects: it served them as a cypher or secret alphabet. If they are not this, they are tales, reveries, and nonsense; or at least a fanciful way of wearing off the wearisomeness of captivity: but the presumption is, they are the former.

Ezekiel begins his book, by speaking of a vision of *cherubims* and of a vision of a *wheel within a wheel*, which he says he saw by the river Chebar, in the land of his captivity. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that by the cherubims he meant the temple at Jerusalem, where they had figures of cherubims? and by a wheel within a wheel, (which as a figure, has always been understood to signify political contrivance,) the project or means of recovering Jerusalem? In the latter part of his book, he supposes himself transported to Jerusalem, and into the temple; and he refers back to the vision on the river Chebar, and says chap. xliii. ver 3. that this last vision was like the vision on the river Chebar; which indicates, that those pretended dreams and visions had for their object the recovery of Jerusalem, and nothing further.

As to the romantic interpretations and applications, wild as the dreams and visions they undertake to explain, which commentators and priests have made of those books, that of converting them into things which they call prophecies, and making them bend to times and circumstances, as far remote even as the present day, it shews the fraud, or the extreme folly, to which credulity or priestcraft can go.

Scarcely any thing can be more absurd, than to suppose, that men situated as Ezekiel and Daniel were, whose country was over-run, and in the possession of the enemy, all their friends and relations in captivity abroad, or in slavery at home, or massacred, or in continual danger of it; scarcely any thing, I say, can be more absurd than to suppose, that such men should find nothing
to.

to do, but that of employing their time and their thoughts about what was to happen to other nations a thousand, or two thousand years after they were dead; at the same time nothing more natural than that they should meditate the recovery of Jerusalem, and their own deliverance; and that this was the sole object of all the obscure and apparently frantic writing contained in those books.

In this sense, the mode of writing used in those two books being forced by necessity, and not adopted by choice, is not irrational; but if we are to use the books as prophecies, they are false. In the 29th chapter of Ezekiel, speaking of Egypt, it is said, ver. 11. "*No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it; neither shall it be inhabited for forty years*" This is what never came to pass, and consequently it is false, as all the books I have already reviewed are. I here close this part of the subject.

In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have spoken of Jonah, and of the story of him and the whale. A fit story for ridicule, if it was written to be believed; or of laughter, if it was intended to try what credulity could swallow; for if it could swallow Jonah and the whale, it could swallow any thing.

But, as is already shewn in the observations on the book of Job and of Proverbs, it is not always certain which of the books in the Bible, are originally Hebrew, or only translations from books of the Gentiles into Hebrew; and as the book of Jonah, so far from treating of the affairs of the Jews, says nothing upon that subject, but treats altogether of the Gentiles, it is more probable that it is a book of the Gentiles, than of the Jews; and that it has been written as a fable, to expose the nonsense, and satyryze the vicious and malignant character of a Bible-prophet, or a predicting priest.

Jonah is represented, first, as a disobedient prophet, running away from his mission, and taking shelter aboard a vessel of the Gentiles, bound from Joppa to Tarshish; as if he ignorantly supposed, by such a paltry contrivance, he could hide himself, where God could not find him. The vessel is overtaken by a storm at sea; and the mariners all of whom are Gentiles, believing it to be a judgment, on account of some one on board who had committed a crime, agreed to cast lots, to discover the offender, and the lot fell upon Jonah. But, before this, they had cast all their wares and merchandize over-board, to lighten the vessel, while Jonah, like a stupid fellow, was fast asleep in the hold.

After the lot had designated Jonah to be the offender, they questioned him to know who, and what he was? and he told them *he was an Hebrew*; and the story implies, that he confessed himself

himself to be guilty. But these Gentiles, instead of sacrificing him at once, without pity or mercy, as a company of Bible-prophets or priests would have done by a Gentile in the same case; and as it is related, Samuel had done by Agag, and Moses by the women and children; they endeavoured to save him, though at the risk of their own lives: for the account says, "*Nevertheless (that is, though Jonah was a Jew, and a foreigner, and the cause of all their misfortunes, and the loss of their cargo,) the men rowed hard to bring the boat to land, but they could not, for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.*" Still, however, they were unwilling to put the fate of the lot into execution, and they cried, says the account, unto the Lord, saying, "*We beseech thee, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood; for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.*" Meaning thereby, that they did not presume to judge Jonah guilty, since that he might be innocent; but that they considered the lot that had fallen upon him as a decree of God, or as it *pleased God*. The address of this prayer shews that the Gentiles worshipped *one Supreme Being*, and that they were not idolaters, as the Jews represented them to be. But the storm still continuing, and the danger encreasing, they put the fate of the lot into execution, and cast Jonah into the sea; where, according to the story, a great fish swallowed him up whole and alive!

We have now to consider Jonah securely housed from the storm in the fish's belly. Here we are told that he prayed; but the prayer is a made-up prayer, taken from various parts of the Psalms, without connection or consistency, and adapted to the distress, but not at all to the condition that Jonah was in. It is such a prayer as a Gentile who might know something of the Psalms, could copy out for him. This circumstance alone, were there no other, is sufficient to indicate that the whole is a made-up story. The prayer, however, is supposed to have answered the purpose, and the story goes on, (taking-off, at the same time the cant language of a Bible-prophet,) saying, "*The Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon dry land.*"

Jonah then received a second mission to Nineveh, with which he sets out; and we have now to consider him as a preacher. The distress he is represented to have suffered, the remembrance of his own disobedience as the cause of it, and the miraculous escape he is supposed to have had, were sufficient, one would conceive, to have impressed him with sympathy and benevolence in the execution of his mission; but instead of this, he enters the city with a denunciation and malediction

malediction in his mouth, crying, "*Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.*"

We have now to consider this supposed missionary in the last act of his mission; and here it is that the malevolent spirit of a Bible-prophet, or of a predicting priest, appears in all that blackness of character, that men ascribe to the being they call the devil.

Having published his predictions, he withdrew, says the story, to the east side of the city.—But for what? not to contemplate in retirement the mercy of his Creator to himself, or to others, but to wait, with malignant impatience, the destruction of Nineveh. It came to pass, however, as the story relates, that the Ninevites reformed, and that God, according to the Bible phrase, repented him of the evil he had said he would do unto them, and did it not. This, saith the first verse of the last chapter, *displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.* His obdurate heart would rather that all Nineveh should be destroyed, and every soul, young and old, perish in its ruins than that his prediction should not be fulfilled. To expose the character of a prophet still more, a gourd is made to grow up in the night, that promises him an agreeable shelter from the heat of the sun, in the place to which he is retired; and the next morning it dies.

Here the rage of the prophet becomes excessive, and he is ready to destroy himself. "*It is better said he, for me to die than to live.*" This brings on a supposed expostulation between the Almighty and the prophet; in which the former says, "*Dost thou well to be angry for the gourd? And Jonah said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it to grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than three-score thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left?*"

Here is both the winding up of the satire, and the moral of the fable. As a satire it strikes against the character of all the Bible-prophets, and against all the indiscriminate judgments upon men, women, and children, with which this lying book the bible is crowded; such as Noah's flood, the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. the extirpation of the Canaanites, even to suckling infants, and women with child, because the same reflection, *that there are more than three-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand, and their left,* meaning young children: applies to all their cases. It satirizes also the supposed partiality of the Creator for one nation more than for another.

As a moral, it preaches against the malevolent spirit of prediction; for as certainly as a man predicts ill, he becomes inclined to wish it. The pride of having his judgment right, hardens his heart, till at last he beholds with satisfaction, or sees with disappointment, the accomplishment or the failure of his predictions. This book ends with the same kind of strong and well-directed point against prophets, prophecies, and indiscriminate judgments, as the chapter that Benjamin Franklin made for the Bible, about Abraham and the stranger, ends against the intolerant spirit of religious persecutions. Thus much for the book of Jonah.

Of the poetical parts of the Bible, that are called prophecies, I have spoken in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, and already in this; where I have said that the word prophet is the Bible-word for poet; and that the flights and metaphors of those poets, many of which are become obscure by the lapse of time and the change of circumstances have been ridiculously erected into things, called prophecies, and applied to purposes the writers never thought of. When a priest quotes any of those passages, he unriddles it agreeably to his own views, and imposes that explanation upon his congregation as the meaning of the writer. The *whore of Babylon* has been the common whore of all the priests, and each has accused the other of keeping the strumpet: so well do they agree in their explanations.

There now remains only a few books, which they call the books of the lesser prophets; and as I have already shewn that the greater are imposters, it would be cowardice to disturb the repose of the little ones. Let them sleep then, in the arms of their nurses, the priests, and both be forgotten together.

I have now gone through the Bible, as a man would go through a wood with an axe on his shoulder, and fell trees. Here they lie; and the priests, if they can, may replant them. They may, perhaps, stick them in the ground, but they will never make them grow.—I pass on to the books of the New Testament.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament, they tell us, is founded upon the prophecies of the Old; if so, it must follow the fate of its foundation.

As it is nothing extraordinary that a woman should be with child before she was married, and that the son she might bring forth

forth should be executed, even unjustly; I see no reason for not believing that such a woman as Mary, and such a man as Joseph, and Jesus existed; their mere existence is a matter of indifference, about which there is no ground, either to believe, or to disbelieve, and which comes under the common head of, *It may be so; and what then?* The probability, however, is, that there were such persons, or at least such as resembled them in part of the circumstances, because almost all romantic stories have been suggested by some actual circumstance; as the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, not a word of which is true, were suggested by the case of Alexander Selkirk.

It is not then the existence, or the non-existence, of the persons that I trouble myself about; it is the fable of Jesus Christ, as told in the New Testament, and the wild and visionary doctrine raised thereon, against which I contend. The story, taking it as it is told, is blasphemously obscene. It gives an account of a young woman engaged to be married, and while under this engagement she is, to speak plain language, debauched by a ghost, under the impious pretence, (Luke, chap. i. ver. 35,) that "*the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*" Notwithstanding which Joseph afterwards marries her, cohabits with her as his wife, and in his turn rivals the ghost. This is putting the story into intelligible language, and when told in this manner, there is not a priest but must be ashamed to own it*.

Obscenity in matters of faith, however wrapped up, is always a token of fable and imposture; for it is necessary to our serious belief in God, that we do not connect it with stories that run, as this does, into ludicrous interpretations. This story is, upon the face of it, the same kind of story as that of Jupiter and Leda, or Jupiter and Europa, or any of the amorous adventures of Jupiter; and shews, as is already stated in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, that the Christian faith is built upon the heathen mythology.

As the historical parts of the New Testament, so far as concerns Jesus Christ, are confined to a very short space of time, less than two years, and all within the same country, and nearly to the same spot, the discordance of time, place, and circumstance, which detects the fallacy of the books of the Old Testament, and proves them to be impositions, cannot be expected to be found here in the same abundance. The New Testament, compared with the Old, is like a farce of one act

* Mary, the supposed virgin mother of Jesus, had several other children, sons and daughters. See Matt. chap. xiii. ver. 55, 56.

in which there is not room for very numerous violations of the unities. There are, however, some glaring contradictions, which, exclusive of the fallacy of the pretended prophecies, are sufficient to shew the story of Jesus Christ to be false.

I lay it down as a position which cannot be controverted, first, that the *agreement* of all the parts of a story does not prove that story to be true, because the parts may agree, and the whole may be false; secondly, that the *disagreement* of the parts of a story proves *the whole cannot be true*. The agreement does not prove truth, but the disagreement proves falshood positively.

The history of Jesus Christ is contained in the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The first chapter of Matthew begins with giving a genealogy of Jesus Christ; and in the third chapter of Luke, there is also given a genealogy of Jesus Christ. Did these two agree, it would not prove the genealogy to be true, because it might, nevertheless be a fabrication; but as they contradict each other in every particular, it proves falshood absolutely. If Matthew speak truth, Luke speaks falshood; and if Luke speak truth, Matthew speaks falshood: and as there is no authority for believing one more than the other, there is no authority for believing either; and if they cannot be believed, even in the very first thing they say, and set out to prove, they are not entitled to be believed in any thing they say afterwards. Truth is an uniform thing; and as to inspiration and revelation, were we to admit it, it is impossible to suppose it can be contradictory. Either then the men called apostles were imposters, or the books ascribed to them have been written by other persons, and fathered upon them, as is the case in the Old Testament.

The book of Matthew gives, chap. i. ver. 6, a genealogy by name from David, up, through Joseph, the husband of Mary, to Christ; and makes there to be *twenty-eight* generations. The book of Luke gives also a genealogy by name from Christ, through Joseph the husband of Mary, down to David, and makes there to be *forty-three* generations; besides which, there is only the two names of David and Joseph that are alike in the two lists. I here insert both genealogical lists, and for the sake of perspicuity and comparison, have placed them both in the same direction, that is, from Joseph down to David.

Genealogy according to
Matthew.

Christ.
2 Joseph

Genealogy according to
Luke.

Christ.
2 Joseph

Genealogy

Genealogy, according to
Matthew.

- 3 Jacob
- 4 Matthan
- 5 Eleazer
- 6 Eliud
- 7 Achim
- 8 Sadoc
- 9 Azor
- 10 Eliakim
- 11 Abiud
- 12 Zorobabel
- 13 Salathiel
- 14 Jechonias
- 15 Josias
- 16 Amon
- 17 Manasses
- 18 Ezekias
- 19 Achaz
- 20 Joatham
- 21 Ozias
- 22 Joram
- 23 Josaphat
- 24 Afa
- 25 Abia
- 26 Roboam
- 27 Solomon
- 28 David *

Genealogy, according to
Luke.

- 3 Heli
- 4 Matthat
- 5 Levi
- 6 Melchi
- 7 Janna
- 8 Joseph
- 9 Mattathias
- 10 Amos
- 11 Naum
- 12 Esli
- 13 Nagge
- 14 Maath
- 15 Mattathias
- 16 Semei
- 17 Joseph
- 18 Juda
- 19 Joanna
- 20 Rhesa
- 21 Zorobabel
- 22 Salathiel
- 23 Neri
- 24 Melchi
- 25 Addi
- 26 Cofam
- 27 Elmodam
- 28 Er
- 29 Jose
- 30 Eliezer
- 31 Jorim
- 32 Matthat
- 33 Levi
- 34 Simeon
- 35 Juda
- 36 Joseph
- 37 Jonan
- 38 Eliakim
- 39 Melea
- 40 Menan
- 41 Mattatha
- 42 Nathan
- 43 David

Now,

† From the birth of David to the birth of Christ is upwards of 1080 years; and as the life-time of Christ is not included, there are but 27 full generations.

To

Now, if these men, Matthew and Luke, set out with a falsehood between them (as these two accounts shew they do) in the very commencement of their history of Jesus Christ, and of who, and of what he was, what authority (as I have before asked) is there left for believing the strange things they tell us afterwards? If they cannot be believed in their account of his natural genealogy, how are we to believe them, when they tell us, he was the son of God, begotten by a ghost; and that an angel announced this in secret to his mother? If they lied in one genealogy, why are we to believe them in the other? If his natural genealogy be manufactured, which it certainly is, why are we not to suppose, that his celestial genealogy is manufactured also; and that the whole is fabulous? Can any man of serious reflection hazard his future happiness upon the belief of a story naturally impossible; repugnant to every idea of decency; and related by persons already detected of falsehood? Is it not more safe, that we stop ourselves at the plain, pure, and unmixed belief of one God, which is deism, than that we commit ourselves on an ocean of improbable, irrational, indecent, and contradictory tales?

The first question, however, upon the books of the New Testament, as upon those of the Old, is, are they genuine? were they written by the persons to whom they are ascribed? for it is upon this ground only, that the strange things related therein have been credited. Upon this point, there is no *direct proof, for, or against*; and all that this state of a case proves, is *doubtfulness*; and doubtfulness is the opposite of belief. The state, therefore, that the books are in, proves against themselves as far as this kind of proof can go.

But, exclusive of this, the presumption is, that the books called the Evangelists, and ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and that they are impositions. The disordered state of the history in these four books, the silence of one book upon matters related in the other, and the disagreement that is to be found among them, implies, that they are the productions of some unconnected individuals, many years after the things they pre-

To find therefore the average age of each person mentioned in the list at the time his first son was born, it is only necessary to divide 1080 by 27, which gives 40 years for each person. As the life-time of man was then but of the same extent it is now it is an absurdity to suppose that 27 following generations should all be old bachelors before, they married! and the more so when we are told that Solomon, the next in succession to David, had a house full of Wives and Mistresses, before he was 21 Years of Age. So far from this genealogy being a solemn truth it is not even a reasonable lie. The list of Luke gives about 26 years for the average age, and this is too much.

tend to relate, each of whom made his own legend; and not the writings of men living intimately together, as the men called apostles are supposed to have done: in fine, that they have been manufactured, as the books of the Old Testament have been, by other persons, than those, whose names they bear.

The story of the angel, announcing, what the church calls the *immaculate conception*, is not so much as mentioned in the books ascribed to Mark, and John; and is differently related in Matthew and Luke. The former says, the angel appeared to Joseph; the latter says, it was to Mary; but either Joseph or Mary was the worst evidence that could have been thought of; for it was others that should have testified *for them*, and not they for themselves. Were any girl that is now with child to say, and even to swear it, that she was gotten with child by a ghost, and that an angel told her so, would she be believed? Certainly she would not. Why then are we to believe the same thing of another girl whom we never saw, told by nobody knows who, nor when, nor where? How strange and inconsistent is it, that the same circumstances that would weaken the belief even of a probable story, should be given as a motive for believing this one that has, upon the face of it, every token of absolute impossibility, and imposture.

The story of Herod destroying all the children under two years old, belongs altogether to the writer of the book of Matthew: not one of the rest mentions any thing about it. Had such a circumstance been true, the universality of it must have made it known to all the writers; and the thing would have been too striking, to have been omitted by any. This writer tells us, that Jesus escaped this slaughter, because Joseph and Mary were warned by an angel, to flee with him into Egypt; but he forgot to make provision for John, who was then under two years of age. John, however, who staid behind, fared as well as Jesus, who fled; and therefore the story circumstantially belies itself.

Not any two of those writers agree in reciting, *exactly in the same words*, the written inscription, short as it is, which they tell us, was put over Christ when he was crucified: and besides this, Mark says, He was crucified at the third hour (nine in the morning) and John says, it was the sixth hour (twelve at noon*.)

* According to John, the sentence was not passed till about the sixth hour (noon) and consequently, the execution could not be till the afternoon; but Mark says expressly, that he was crucified at the third hour, (nine in the morning) chap. xv. ver. 25. John, chap. xix. ver. 14.

The inscription is thus stated in those books.

Matthew——This is Jesus the king of the Jews.

Mark ———The king of the Jews.

Luke ———This is the king of the Jews.

John ———Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews.

We may infer from these circumstances, trivial as they are, that those writers, whoever they were, and in whatever time they lived, were not present at the scene. The only one of the men, called apostles, who appears to have been near to the spot, was Peter; and when he was accused of being one of Jesus's followers, it is said (Matthew, chap. xxvi. ver. 74,) "*Then Peter began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man:*" yet we are now called upon to believe the same Peter, convicted, by their own account, of perjury. For what reason, or on what authority, should we do this?

The accounts that are given of the circumstances, that they tell us attended the crucifixion, are differently related in those four books.

The book ascribed to Matthew says, "*There was darkness over all the land, from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour—that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom—that there was an earthquake—that the rocks rent—that the graves opened, that the bodies of many of the saints that slept, arose, and came out of their graves after the resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*" Such is the account which this dashing writer of the book of Matthew gives; but in which he is not supported by the writers of the other books.

The writer of the book ascribed to Mark, in detailing the circumstances of the crucifixion, makes no mention of any earthquake, nor of the rocks rending, nor of the graves opening, nor of the dead men walking out. The writer of the book of Luke is silent also upon the same points. And as to the writer of the book of John, though he details all the circumstances of the crucifixion down to the burial of Christ, he says nothing about either the darkness—the veil of the temple—the earthquake—the rocks—the graves—nor the dead men.

Now if it had been true, that these things had happened; and if the writers of these books had lived at the time they did happen, and had been the persons they are said to be, namely the four men called apostles, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it was not possible for them, as true historians, even without the aid of inspiration, not to have recorded them. The things supposing them to have been facts, were of too much notoriety not to have been known, and of too much importance not to have been told. All these supposed apostles must have been

witnesses

witnesses of the earthquake, if there had been any ; for it was not possible for them to have been absent from it ; the opening of the graves, and the resurrection of the dead men, and their walking about the city, is of still greater importance than the earthquake. An earthquake is always possible, and natural, and proves nothing ; but this opening of the graves is supernatural, and directly in point to their doctrine, their cause, and their apostleship. Had it been true, it would have filled up whole chapters of those books, and been the chosen theme, and general chorus of all the writers ; but instead of this, little and trivial things, and mere prattling conversation of, *he said this*, and *she said that*, are often tediously detailed, while this most important of all, had it been true, is passed off in a slovenly manner, by a single dash of the pen, and that by one writer only, and not so much as hinted at by the rest.

It is an easy thing to tell a lie, but it is difficult to support the lie after it is told. The writer of the book of Matthew should have told us who the saints were that came to life again, and went into the city, and what became of them afterwards, and who it was that saw them ; for he is not hardy enough to say that he saw them himself ;—whether they came out naked, and all in natural buff, he-saints and she-saints ; or whether they came full dressed, and where they got their dresses ; whether they went to their former habitations, and reclaimed their wives, their husbands, and their property, and how they were received ; whether they entered ejectments for the recovery of their possessions, or brought actions of *crim. con.* against the rival interlopers ; whether they remained on earth, and followed their former occupation of preaching or working ; or whether they died again, or went back to their graves alive, and buried themselves.

Strange indeed, that an army of saints should return to life, and no body know who they were, nor who it was that saw them, and that not a word more should be said upon the subject, nor these saints have any thing to tell us ! Had it been the prophets who (as we are told) had formerly prophesied of these things, they must have had a great deal to say. They could have told us every thing, and we should have had posthumous prophecies, with notes and commentaries upon the first, a little better at least than we have now. Had it been Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and Samuel, and David, not an unconverted Jew had remained in all Jerusalem. Had it been John the Baptist, and the saints of the times then present, every body would have known them, and they would have out-preached and out-famed all the other apostles. But instead of this, these saints are made to pop up, like Jonah's gourd in the night, for no purpose at all, but to wither in the morning. Thus much for this part of the story.

The tale of the resurrection follows that of the crucifixion ; and in this, as well as in that, the writers, whoever they were, disagree so much, as to make it evident that none of them were there.

The book of Matthew states, that when Christ was put in the sepulchre, the Jews applied to Pilate for a watch or a guard to be placed over the sepulchre, to prevent the body being stolen by the disciples ; and that, in consequence of this request, the sepulchre *was made sure, sealing the stone* that covered the mouth, and setting a watch. But the other books say nothing about this application, nor about the sealing, nor the guard, nor the watch ; and according to their accounts, there were none. Matthew, however, follows up this part of the story of the guard or the watch with a second part, that I shall notice in the conclusion, as it serves to detect the fallacy of those books.

The book of Matthew continues its account, and says, (chap. xxviii. ver. 1,) that, at the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn, towards the first day of the week, came *Mary Magdalene* and the *other Mary*, to see the sepulchre. Mark says it was sun-rising, and John says it was dark. Luke says it was *Mary Magdalene*, and *Joanna*, and *Mary the mother of James*, and *other women*, that came to the sepulchre ; and John states, that *Mary Magdalene* came alone. So well do they agree about their first evidence ! they all, however, appear to have known most about *Mary Magdalene* ; she was a woman of a large acquaintance, and it was not an ill conjecture that she might be upon the stroll.

The book of Matthew goes on to say, (ver. 2,) “ And behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and *sat upon it*.” But the other books say nothing about any earthquake, nor about the angel rolling back the stone, and *sitting upon it* ; and according to their accounts, there was no angel *sitting there*, Mark says, the angel *was within the sepulchre, sitting* on the right side. Luke says there were two, and they were both standing up ; and John says, they were both sitting down, one at the head, and the other at the feet.

Matthew says, that the angel that was sitting upon the stone on the outside of the sepulchre, told the two Marys that Christ was risen, and that the women went *away* quickly. Mark says, that the women, upon seeing the stone rolled away, and wondering at it, went *into* the sepulchre, and that it was the angel that was *sitting* within on the right side, that told them so. Luke says, it was the two angels that were standing up ; and

and John says, it was Jesus Christ himself that told it to Mary-Magdalene ; and that she did not go into the sepulchre, but only stooped down and looked in.

Now if the writers of these four books had gone into a court of justice, to prove an *alibi*, (for it is of the nature of an *alibi* that is here attempted to be proved, namely, the absence of a dead body, by supernatural means,) and had they given their evidence in the same contradictory manner as it is here given, they would have been in danger of having their ears cropt for perjury, and would have justly deserved it. Yet this is the evidence, and these are the books, that have been imposed upon the world, as being given by divine inspiration, and as the unchangeable word of God.

The writer of the book of Matthew, after giving this account, relates a story that is not to be found in any of the other books, and which is the same I have just before alluded to.

“ Now, says he, (that is, after the conversation the women had had with the angel sitting upon the stone,) behold some of the watch (meaning the watch that he had said had been placed over the sepulchre) came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done ; and when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, that his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we *slept* ; and if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught ; and this saying (that his disciples stole him away) is commonly reported among the Jews *until this day*.”

The expression, *until this day*, is an evidence that the book ascribed to Matthew was not written by Matthew, and that it has been manufactured long after the times and things of which it pretends to treat ; for the expression implies a great length of intervening time. It would be inconsistent in us to speak in this manner of any thing happening in our own time. To give, therefore, intelligible meaning to the expression, we must suppose a lapse of some generations at least, for this manner of speaking carries the mind back to an ancient time.

The absurdity also of the story is worth noticing ; for it shews the writer of the book of Matthew to have been an exceeding weak and foolish man. He tells a story, that contradicts itself in point of possibility : for though the guard, if there were any, might be made to say that the body was taken away while they were *asleep*, and to give that as a reason for their not having presented it, that same sleep must also have prevented their knowing how, and by whom it was done ; and yet they are made to say, that it was the disciples who did it. Were a man to tender his evidence of something that he should say was

done, and of the manner of doing it, and of the person who did it, while he was asleep, and could know nothing of the matter, such evidence could not be received: it will do well enough for Testament evidence, but not for any thing where truth is concerned.

I come now to that part of the evidence in those books, that respects the pretended appearance of Christ after this pretended resurrection.

The writer of the book of Matthew relates, that the angel that was sitting on the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre, said to the two Marys, chap. xxviii. ver. 7, "*Behold Christ is gone before you into Galilee, there ye shall see him; lo, I have told you.*" And the same writer, at the two next verses, (8, 9,) makes Christ himself to speak to the same purpose to these women, immediately after the angel had told it to them, and that they ran quickly to tell it to the disciples; and at the 16th Verse it is said, "*Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them; and when they saw him, they worshipped him.*"

But the writer of the book of John tells us a story very different to this; for he says, chap. xx. ver. 19, "*Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, (that is, the same day that Christ is said to have risen,) when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst of them.*"

According to Matthew, the eleven were marching to Galilee, to meet Jesus in a mountain, by his own appointment, at the very time when, according to John, they were assembled in another place, and that not by appointment, but in secret, for fear of the Jews.

The writer of the book of Luke contradicts that of Matthew more pointedly than John does; for he says expressly, that the meeting was in *Jerusalem* the evening of the same day that he (Christ) rose, and that the *eleven* were *there*. See Luke, chap. xxiv. ver. 13, 33.

Now it is not possible, unless we admit these supposed disciples the right of wilful lying, that the writer of these books could be any of the eleven persons called disciples; for if, according to Matthew, the eleven went into Galilee to meet Jesus in a mountain by his own appointment, on the same day that he is said to have risen, Luke and John must have been two of that eleven; yet the writer of Luke says expressly, and John implies as much, that the meeting was that same day, in a house in Jerusalem; and on the other hand if, according to Luke and John, the *eleven* were assembled in a house in Jerusalem, Matthew must have been one of that eleven; yet

Matthew

Matthew says, the meeting was in a mountain in Galilee, and consequently the evidence given in those books destroy each other.

The writer of the book of Mark says nothing about any meeting in Galilee; but he says, chap. xvi. ver. 12, that Christ, after his resurrection, appeared in *another form* to two of them, as they walked into the country, and that these two told it to the residue, who would not believe them. Luke also tells a story, in which he keeps Christ employed the whole of the day of this pretended resurrection, until the evening, and which totally invalidates the account of going to the mountain in Galilee. He says, that two of them, without saying which two, went that *same day* to a village called Emmaus, threescore furlongs (seven miles and a half) from Jerusalem, and that Christ in disguise went with them, and staid with them unto the evening, and supped with them, and then vanished out of their sight, and re-appeared that same evening, at the meeting of the eleven in Jerusalem.

This is the contradictory manner in which the evidence of this pretended re-appearance of Christ is stated; the only point in which the writer's agree, is the skulking privacy of that re-appearance; for whether it was in the recess of a mountain in Galilee, or in a shut-up house in Jerusalem, it was still skulking. To what cause then are we to assign this skulking? On the other hand, it is directly repugnant to the supposed or pretended end, that of convincing the world that Christ was risen; and on the other hand, to have asserted the publicity of it, would have exposed the writers of those books to public detection; and therefore they have been under the necessity of making it a private affair.

As to the account of Christ being seen by more than five hundred at once, it is Paul only who says it, and not the five hundred who say it for themselves. It is therefore the testimony but of one man, and that too of a man, who did not, according to the same account, believe a word of the matter himself, at the time it is said to have happened. His evidence, supposing him to have been the writer of the 15th chapter of Corinthians, where this account is given, is like that of a man, who comes into a court of justice to swear, that what he had sworn before is false. A man may often see reason, and he has too always the right of changing his opinion; but this liberty does not extend to matters of fact.

I now come to the last scene, that of the ascension into heaven. Here all fear of the Jews, and of every thing else, must necessarily have been out of the question; it was that which, if true, was to seal the whole; and upon which the reality

reality of the future mission of the disciples was to rest for proof. Words, whether declarations, or promises that passed in private, either in the recess of a mountain in Galilee, or in a shut-up house in Jerusalem, even supposing them to have been spoken, could not be evidence in public: it was therefore necessary that this last scene should preclude the possibility of denial and dispute; and that it should be, as I have stated in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, as public and as visible, as the sun at noon day; at least, it ought to have been as public as the crucifixion is reported to have been. But to come to the point:

In the first place the writer of the book of Matthew does not say a syllable about it; neither does the writer of the book of John. This being the case, it is possible to suppose, that those writers, who affect to be even minute in other matters, would have been silent upon this, had it been true? The writer of the book of Mark passes it off in a careless, slovenly manner, with a single dash of the pen; as if he was tired of romancing, or ashamed of the story. So also does the writer of Luke. And even between these two, there is not an apparent agreement, as to the place where this final parting is said to have been.

THE BOOK OF MARK says, that Christ appeared to the eleven, as they sat at meat; alluding to the meeting of the eleven at Jerusalem: he then states the conversation, that he says passed at that meeting; and immediately after says, (as a school-boy would finish a dull story), "*So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*" But the writer of Luke says, that the ascension was from Bethany; that *he* (Christ) *led them out as far as Bethany, and was parted from them there, and was carried up into Heaven.* So also was Mahomet: and as to Moses, the apostle Jude says, ver. 9. *That Michael and the devil disputed about his body.* While we believe such fables as these, or either of them, we believe unworthy of the Almighty.

I have now gone through the examination of the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and when it is considered that the whole space of time, from the crucifixion to what is called the ascension, is but a few days, apparently not more than three or four, and that all the circumstances are reported to have happened, nearly about the same spot, Jerusalem, it is, I believe, impossible to find in any story upon record, so many, and such glaring absurdities, contradictions, and falsehoods, as are in those books. They are more numerous and striking, than I had any expectation of finding when I began this examination, and far more so than I had any Idea of when I wrote the former part of the *Age of Reason*. I had then

then neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, nor could I procure any. My own situation, even as to existence, was becoming every day more precarious; and as I was willing to leave something behind me upon the subject, I was obliged to be quick and concise. The quotations I then made, were from memory only, but they are correct; and the opinions I have advanced in that work, are the effect of the most clear and long established conviction,—that the Bible and the Testament are impositions upon the world;—that the fall of man, the account of Jesus Christ being the Son of God, and of his dying to appease the wrath of God, and of salvation by that strange means, are all fabulous inventions, dishonourable to the wisdom and power of the Almighty;—that the only true religion is deism, by which I then meant, and now mean, the belief of one God, and an imitation of his moral character, or the practice of what are called moral virtues;—and that it was upon this only (so far as religion is concerned) that I rested all my hopes of happiness hereafter. So say I now—and so help me God.

But to return to the subject.—Though it is impossible, at this distance of time, to ascertain as a fact, who were the writers of those four books (and this alone is sufficient to hold them in doubt, and where we doubt, we do not believe), it is not difficult to ascertain negatively, that they were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed. The contradictions in those books demonstrate two things;

First, that the writers cannot have been eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of the matters they relate, or they would have related them without those contradictions; and consequently that the books have not been written by the persons called apostles, who are supposed to have been witnesses of this kind.

Secondly, that the writers, whoever they were, have not acted in concerted imposition; but each writer, separately, and individually for himself, and without the knowledge of the other.

The same evidence that applies to prove the one, applies equally to prove both those cases; that is, that the books were not written by the men called apostles, and also that they are not a concerted imposition. As to inspiration, it is altogether out of the question; we may as well attempt to unite truth and falsehood, as inspiration and contradiction.

If four men are eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses to a scene; they will, without any concert between them, agree as to the time and place, when and where that scene happened. Their individual

individual knowledge of the *thing*, each one knowing it for himself, renders concert totally unnecessary; the one will not say it was in a mountain in the country, and the other at a house in town; the one will not say it was at sun-rise, and the other that it was dark. For in whatever place it was, and at whatever time it was, they know it equally alike.

And on the other hand, if four men concert a story, they will make their separate relations of that story agree and corroborate with each other to support the whole. *That* concert supplies the want of fact in the one case, as the knowledge of the fact supercedes in the other case, the necessity of a concert. The same contradictions, therefore, that prove there has been no concert, prove also, that the reporters had no knowledge of the fact, (or rather of that which they relate as a fact,) and detect also the falshood of their reports. Those books, therefore have neither been written by the men called apostles, nor by imposters in concert. How then have they been written?

I am not one of those who are fond of believing there is much of that which is called wilful lying, or lying originally, except in the case of men setting up to be prophets, as in the Old Testament; for prophesying is lying professionally. In almost all other cases, it is not difficult to discover the progress, by which even simple supposition, with the aid of credulity, will in time grow into a lie, and at last be told as a fact; and whenever we can find a charitable reason for a thing of this kind, we ought not to indulge a severe one.

The story of Jesus Christ appearing after he was dead, is the story of an apparition; such as timid imaginations can always create in vision, and credulity believe. Stories of this kind had been told of the assassination of Julius Cæsar, not many years before, and they generally have their origin in violent deaths, or in execution of innocent persons. In cases of this kind, compassion lends its aid, and benevolently stretches the story. It goes on a little and a little farther, till it becomes a *most certain truth*. Once start a ghost, and credulity fills up the history of its life, and assigns the cause of its appearance; one tells it one way, another another way, till there are as many stories about the ghost, and about the proprietor of the ghost, as there are about Jesus Christ in these four books.

The story of the appearance of Jesus Christ is told with that strange mixture of the natural and impossible, that distinguishes legendary tale from fact. He is represented as suddenly coming in, and going out, when the doors are shut, and of vanishing out of sight, and appearing again, as one
would

would conceive of an unsubstantial vision ; then again he is hungry, sits down to meat, and eats his supper. But as those who tell stories of this kind, never provides for all the cases, so it is here : they have told us, that when he arose, he left his grave cloaths behind him ; but they have forgotten to provide other clothes for him to appear in afterwards, or to tell us what he did with them, when he ascended ; whether he stripped all off, or went up, clothes and all. In the case of Elijah, they have been careful enough to make him throw down his mantle ; how it happened not to be burnt in the chariot of fire, *they* also have not told us. But as imagination supplies all deficiencies of this kind, we may suppose, if we please, that it was made of salamander's wool.

Those who are not much acquainted with ecclesiastical history may suppose, that the book called the New Testament has existed ever since the time of Jesus Christ, as they suppose that the books ascribed to Moses, have existed ever since the time of Moses. But the fact is historically otherwise ; there was no such book as the New Testament, till more than three hundred years after the time that Christ is said to have lived.

At what time the books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, began to appear, is altogether a matter of uncertainty. There is not the least shadow of evidence of who the persons were that wrote them, nor at what time they were written ; and they might as well have been called by the names of any of the other supposed apostles, as by the names they are now called. The originals are not in the possession of any christian church existing, any more than the two tables of stone written on, they pretend, by the finger of God, upon Mount Sinai, and given to Moses, are in the possession of the Jews. And even if they were, there is no possibility of proving the hand-writing in either case. At the time those books were written, there was no printing, and consequently there could be no publication, otherwise than by written copies, which any man might make or alter at pleasure, and call them originals. Can we suppose it is consistent with the wisdom of the Almighty, to commit himself, and his will to man upon such precarious means as these ; or that it is consistent we should pin our faith upon such uncertainties ? We cannot make nor alter, nor even imitate so much as one blade of grass that he has made, and yet we can make or alter *words of God*, as easily as words of man*.

K

About

* The former part of the *Age of Reason* has not been published two years, and there is already an expression in it, that is not mine. The expression is, *The book of Luke was carried by a majority of one voice only.* It may be true, but it is not I that

About three hundred and fifty years after the time that Christ is said to have lived, several writings of the kind I am speaking of, were scattered in the hands of divers individuals; and as the church had began to form itself into an hierarchy, or church government with temporal powers, it set itself about collecting them into a code, as we now see them, called *The New Testament*. They decided by vote, as I have before said in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, which of those writings out of the collection they had made, should be the *word of God*, and which should not. The Rabbins of the Jews had decided, by vote, upon the books of the Bible before.

As the object of the church, as is the case in all national establishments of churches, was power and revenue, and terror the means it used; it is consistent to suppose, that the most miraculous and wonderful of the writings they had collected, stood the best chance of being voted. And as to the authenticity of the books, the *vote stands in the place of it*; for it can be traced no higher.

Disputes, however, ran high among the people then calling themselves Christians; not only as to points of doctrine, but as to the authenticity of the books. In the contest between the person called Saint Augustine, and Fauste, about the year 400, the latter says, "The books, called the Evangelists, have been composed long after the times of the apostles by some obscure men, who fearing that the world would not give credit to their relation of matters, of which they could not be informed, have published them under the names of the apostles; and which are so full of sottishness and discordant relations, that there is neither agreement, nor connection between them."

And in another place, addressing himself to the advocates of those books, as being the word of God, he says, "It is thus that your predecessors have inserted, in the scriptures of our Lord, many things, which, though they carry his name, agree not with his doctrine. This is not surprising, *since that we have often proved*, that these things have not been written by himself, nor by his apostles, but that for the greatest part they are founded upon *tales*, upon *vague reports*, and put together

I that have said it. Some person, who might know of that circumstance, has had ded it in a note at the bottom of the page of some of the editions, printed either in England, or in America; and the printers, after that, have erected it into the body of the work, and made me the author of it. If this has happened within such a short space of time, notwithstanding the aid of printing, which prevents the alteration of copies individually; what may not have happened in a much greater length of time, when there was no printing, and when any man who could write, could make a written copy, and call it an original, by Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John?

but I know not what, half-Jews, with but little agreement between them; and which they have nevertheless published under the name of the apostles of our Lord, and have thus attributed to them their own *errors and their lies**.”

The reader will see by those extracts that the authenticity of the books of the New Testament was denied, and the books treated as tales, forgeries, and lies, at the time they were voted to be the word of God. But the interest of the church, with the assistance of the faggot, bore down the opposition, and at last suppressed all investigation. Miracles followed upon miracles, if we will believe them, and men were taught to say they believed, whether they believed or not. But (by way of throwing in a thought) the French revolution has excommunicated the church from the power of working miracles; she has not been able, with the assistance of all her saints, to work *one* miracle since the revolution began; and as she never stood in greater need than now, we may, without the aid of divination, conclude, that all her former miracles are tricks and lies*.

When we consider the lapse of more than three hundred years intervening between the time that Christ is said to have lived, and the time the New Testament was formed into a book, we must see, even without the assistance of historical evidence, the exceeding uncertainty there is of it's authenticity. The authenticity of the book of Homer, so far as regards the

* I have taken those two extracts from Boulanger's Life of Paul, written in, French, Boulanger has quoted them from the writings of Augustine against Fauste, to which he refers.

† Boulanger, in his Life of Paul, has collected from the ecclesiastical histories, and the writings of the fathers, as they are called, several matters which shew the opinions that prevailed among the different sects of Christians, at the time the Testament, as we now see it, was voted to be the word of God. The following extracts are from the second chapter of that work.

“The Marcionists (a Christian sect) assured that the evangelists were filled with falsities. The Manichæens, who formed a very numerous sect at the commencement of Christianity, *rejected as false all the New Testament*; and shewed other writings quite different, that they gave for authentic. The Cérinthiens, like the Marcionists, admitted not the Acts of the Apostles. The Encratites and the Sevenians adopted neither the Acts, nor the Epistles of Paul. Chrysostom, in a homily, which he made upon the Acts of the Apostles, says, that in his time, about the year 400, many people knew nothing either of the author, nor of the book. St. Irene, who lived before that time, reports that the Valentinians, like several other sects of the Christians, accused the scriptures of being filled with errors, imperfections, and contradictions. The Ebionites, or Nazarenes, who were the first Christians, rejected all the Epistles of Paul, and regarded him as an impostor. They report among other Things, that he was originally a Pagan, that he came to Jerusalem, where he lived some time; and that having a mind to marry the daughter of the high priest, he had himself been circumcised; but that not being able to obtain her, he quarrelled with the Jews, and wrote against circumcision, and against the observation of the sabbath, and against all the legal Ordinances.

authorship, is much better established than that of the New Testament, though Homer is a thousand years the most ancient. It was only an exceeding good poet that could have written the book of Homer, and therefore few men only could have attempted it; and a man capable of doing it, would not have thrown away his own fame, by giving it to another. In like manner, there were but few that could have composed Euclid's Elements, because none but an exceeding good geometrician could have been the author of that work.

But with respect to the books of the New Testament, particularly such parts as tell us of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, any person who could tell a story of an apparition, or of a *man's walking*, could have made such books; for the story is most wretchedly told. The chance, therefore, of forgery in the Testament, is millions to one greater than in the case of Homer or Euclid. Of the numerous priests or parsons of the present day, bishops and all, every one of them can make a sermon, or translate a scrap of Latin, especially if it has been translated a thousand times before: but is there any amongst them that can write poetry like Homer, or science like Euclid? The sum total of a parson's learning, with very few exceptions, is, a b, ab, and hic hæc hoc; and their knowledge of science is, three times one is three; and this is more than sufficient to have enabled them, had they lived at the time, to have written all the books of the New Testament.

As the opportunities of forgery were greater, so also was the inducement. A man could gain no advantage by writing under the name of Homer or Euclid; if he could write equal to them, it would be better that he wrote under his own name; if inferior, he could not succeed. Pride would prevent the former, and impossibility the latter. But with respect to such books as compose the New Testament, all the inducements were on the side of forgery. The best imagined history that could have been made at the distance of two or three hundred years after the time, could not have passed for an original under the name of the real writer; the only chance of success lay in forgery; for the church wanted pretence for its new doctrine, and truth and talents were out of the question.

But as it is not uncommon (as before observed) to relate stories of persons *walking* after they are dead, and of ghosts and apparitions of such as have fallen by some violent or extraordinary means; and as the people of that day were in the habit of believing such things, and of the appearance of angels, and
also

also of devils, and of their getting into people's insides, and shaking them like a fit of an ague, and of their being cast out again as if by an emetic; (Mary Magdelene, the book of Mark tells us, had brought up, or been brought to bed of seven devils;) it was nothing extraordinary that some story of this kind should get abroad of the person called Jesus Christ, and become afterwards, the foundation of the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each writer told the tale as he heard it, or thereabouts, and gave to his book the name of the saint or the apostle, whom tradition had given as the eye-witness. It is only upon this ground that the contradictions in those books can be accounted for; and if this be not the case, they are downright impositions, lies, and forgeries, without even the apology of credulity.

That they have been written by a sort of half Jews, as the foregoing quotations mention, is discernible enough. The frequent references made to that chief assassin and impostor Moses, and to the men called prophets, establishes this point; and on the other hand, the church has complimented the fraud by admitting the Bible and the Testament to reply to each other. Between the Christian-Jew and the Christian-Gentile, the thing called a prophecy, and the thing prophesied of: the type, and the thing typified; the sign and the thing signified; have been industriously rummaged up, and fitted together like old locks and picklock-keys. The story foolishly enough told of Eve and the serpent, and naturally enough as to the enmity between men and serpents; (for the serpent always bites about the *heel*, because it cannot reach higher; and the man always knocks the serpent about the *head*, as the most effectual way to prevent its biting*;) this foolish story, I say, has been made into a prophecy, a type, and a promise to begin with; and the lying imposition of Isaiah to Ahaz, *That a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*, as a sign that Ahaz should conquer, when the event was that he was defeated, (as already noticed in the observations on the book of Isaiah,) has been perverted, and made to serve as a winder up.

Jonah and the whale are also made into a sign and type. Jonah is Jesus, and the whale is the grave; for it is said, (and they have made Christ to say it of himself,) Matt. chap. xvii. ver. 40, "For as Jonah was *three days and three nights* in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth." But it happens awkwardly

* "It shall bruise thy *head*, and thou shalt bruise his *heel*." Genesis, chap. vii. ver. 15.

enough that Christ, according to their own account, was but one day and two nights in the grave; about 36 hours, instead of 72; that is the Friday night, the Saturday, and the Saturday night; for they say, he was up on the Sunday morning by sun-rise or before. But as this fits quite as well as the *bite* and the *kick* in Genesis, and the *virgin* and her *son* in Isaiah, it will pass in the lump of *orthodox* things. Thus much for the historical part of the Testament and its evidences.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL.

The epistles ascribed to Paul, being fourteen in number, almost fill up the remaining part of the Testament. Whether those epistles were written by the person to whom they are ascribed is a matter of no great importance, since that the writer, whoever he was, attempts to prove his doctrine by argument. He does not attempt to have been witness to any of the scenes told of the resurrection and the ascension, and he declares that he had not believed them.

The story of his being struck to the ground as he was journeying to Damascus, has nothing in it miraculous or extraordinary; he escaped with life, and that is more than many others have done who have been struck with lightning; and that he should lose his sight for three days, and be unable to eat or drink during that time, is nothing more than is common in such conditions. His companions that were with him appear not to have suffered in the same manner, for they were well enough to lead him the remainder of the journey; neither did they pretend to have seen any vision.

The character of the person called Paul according to the accounts given of him, has in it a great deal of violence and fanaticism; he had persecuted with as much heat as he preached afterwards; the stroke he had received had changed his thinking, without altering his constitution; and either as a Jew or a Christian he was the same zealot. Such men are never good moral evidences of any doctrine they preach. They are always in extremes, as well of action as of belief.

The doctrine he sets out to prove by argument, is the resurrection of the same body, and he advances this as an evidence of immortality. But so much will men differ in their manner of thinking, and in the conclusions they draw from the same premises, that this doctrine of the resurrection of the same body, so far from being an evidence of immortality, appears to me to furnish an evidence against it; for if I have already

ready died in this body, and am raised again in the same body in which I have died, it is presumptive evidence that I shall die again. That resurrection no more secures me against the repetition of dying, than an ague fit, when past, secures me against another. To believe therefore in immortality, I must have a more elevated idea, than is contained in the gloomy doctrine of the resurrection.

Besides, as a matter of choice, as well as of hope, I had rather have a better body and a more convenient form, than the present. Every animal in the creation excels us in something. The winged insects, without mentioning doves or eagles, can pass over more space, and with greater ease, in a few minutes, than man can in an hour. The glide of the smallest fish, in proportion to its bulk, exceeds us in motion, almost beyond comparison, and without weariness. Even the sluggish snail can ascend from the bottom of a dungeon, where man, by the want of that ability would perish; and a spider can launch itself from the top, as a playful amusement. The personal powers of man are so limited, and his heavy frame so little constructed to extensive enjoyment, that there is nothing to induce us to wish the opinion of Paul to be true. It is too little for the magnitude of the scene; too mean for the sublimity of the subject.

But all other arguments apart, the *consciousness of existence* is the only conceivable idea we can have of another life, and the continuance of that consciousness is immortality. The consciousness of existence, or the knowing that we exist, is not necessarily confined to the same form, nor to the same matter, even in this life.

We have not in all cases the same form, nor in any case the same matter that composed our bodies twenty or thirty years ago; and yet we are conscious of being the same persons. Even legs and arms, which make up almost half the human frame, are not necessary to the consciousness of existence. These may be lost or taken away, and the full consciousness of existence remain; and were their place supplied by wings or other appendages, we cannot conceive that it could alter our consciousness of existence. In short we know not how much, or rather how little, of our composition it is, and how exquisitely fine that little is, that creates in us this consciousness of existence; and all beyond that is like the pulp of a peach distinct and separate from the vegetative speck in the kernel.

Who can say by what exceeding fine action of fine matter it is that a thought is produced in what we call the mind? And yet that thought, when produced, as I now produce the thought

I am

I am writing, is capable of becoming immortal, and is the only production of man that has that capacity.

Statues of brass or marble will perish; and statues made in imitation of them are not the same statues, nor the same workmanship, any more than a copy of a picture is the same picture. But print and reprint a thought, a thousand times over, and that with materials of any kind, carve it in wood, or engrave it in stone, the thought is eternally and identically the same thought in every case. It has a capacity of unimpaired existence, unaffected by change of matter, and is essentially distinct, and of a nature different from every thing else that we know of, or can conceive. If then the thing produced has in itself a capacity of being immortal, it is more than a token that the power that produced it, which is the self-same thing as consciousness of existence, can be immortal also; and that as independently of the matter it was first connected with, as the thought is of the printing or writing, it first appeared in. The one idea is not more difficult to believe than the other; and we can see that one is true.

That the consciousness of existence is not dependent on the same form or the same matter, is demonstrated to our senses in the works of the creation, as far as our senses are capable of receiving that demonstration. A very numerous part of the animal creation preaches to us, far better than Paul, the belief of a life hereafter. Their little life resembles an earth and a heaven, a present and a future state; and comprises, if it may be so expressed, immortality in miniature.

The most beautiful parts of the creation, to our eye, are the winged insect; and they are not so originally. They acquire that form and that inimitable brilliancy by progressive changes. The slow and creeping caterpillar worm of to day, passes in a few days to a torpid figure and a state resembling death; and in the next change comes forth in all the miniature magnificence of life, a splendid butterfly. No resemblance of the former creature remains; every thing is changed; all his powers are new, and life is to him another thing. We cannot conceive that the consciousness of existence is not the same in this state of the animal as before: why then must I believe that the resurrection of the same body is necessary to continue to me the consciousness of existence hereafter?

In the former part of the *Age of Reason* I have called the creation the true and only real word of God; and this instance, or this text, in the book of creation, not only shews to us that this thing may be so, but that it is so; and that

that the belief of a future state is a *rational belief*, founded upon facts visible in the creation: for it is not more difficult to believe that we shall exist hereafter in a better state and form than at present, than that a worm should become a butterfly, and quit the dunghill for the atmosphere, if we did not know it as a fact.

As to the doubtful jargon ascribed to Paul in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, which makes part of the burial-service of some Christian sectaries, it is as destitute of meaning as the tolling of the bell at the funeral. It explains nothing to the understanding; it illustrates nothing to the imagination; but leaves the reader to find any meaning if he can. "All flesh," says he, "is not the same flesh. There is one flesh of men, another of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." And what then? nothing. A cook could have said as much. "There are also", says he, "bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial; the glory of the celestial is *one*, and the glory of the terrestrial is the *other*." And what then? nothing. And what is the difference? nothing that he has told. "There is," says he, "one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars." And what then? nothing; except that he says that *one star differeth from another star in glory*, instead of distance; and he might as well have told us, that the moon did not shine so bright as the sun. All this is nothing better than the jargon of a conjuror, who picks up phrases he does not understand, to confound the credulous people who come to have their fortune told. Priests and conjurors are of the same trade.

Sometimes Paul affects to be a naturalist, and to prove his system of resurrection from the principles of vegetation. "Thou fool," says he, "that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." To which one might reply in his own language, and say, Thou fool, Paul, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die *not*; for the grain that dies in the ground, never does, nor can vegetate. It is only the living grains that produce the next crop. But the metaphor, in any point of view, is no simile. It is succession and resurrection.

The progress of an animal, from one state of being to another, as from a worm to a butterfly, applies to the case; but this of the grain does not; and shews Paul to have been, what he says of others, *a fool*.

Whether the fourteen epistles ascribed to Paul were written by him or not, is a matter of indifference; they are either argumentative or dogmatical; and as the argument is defective, and the dogmatical part is merely presumptive, it signifies not who wrote them. And the same may be said for the remaining parts of the Testament. It is not upon the Epistles, but upon

what is called the Gospel, contained in the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and upon the pretended prophecies, that the theory of the church, calling itself the Christian church, is founded. The epistles are dependent upon those, and must follow their fate; for if the story of Jesus Christ be fabulous, all reasoning founded upon it, as a supposed truth, must fall with it.

We know, from history, that one of the principal leaders of this church, Athanasius, lived at the time the New Testament* was formed; and we know also, from the absurd jargon he has left us, under the name of a creed, the character of the men who formed the New Testament; and we know also from the same history, that the authenticity of the books, of which it is composed, was denied at the time. It is upon the vote of such as Athanasius, that the Testament was decreed to be the word of God: and nothing can present to us a more strange idea, than that of decreeing the word of God by vote. Those who rest their faith upon such authority, put man in the place of God, and have no true foundation for future happiness. Credulity, however, is not a crime; but it becomes criminal by resisting conviction. It is strangling in the womb of the conscience the efforts it makes to ascertain truth. We should never force belief upon ourselves in any thing.

I here close the subject on the Old Testament, and the New. The evidence I have produced, to prove them forgeries, is extracted from the books themselves, and acts, like a two-edged sword, either way. If the evidence be denied, the authenticity of the scriptures is denied with it; for it is scripture evidence; and if the evidence be admitted, the authenticity of the books is disproved. The contradictory impossibilities contained in the Old Testament, and the New, put them in the case of a man who swears *for* and *against*. Either evidence convicts him of perjury, and equally destroys reputation.

Should the Bible and Testament hereafter fall, it is not I that have done it. I have done no more, than extracted the evidence from the confused mass of matters with which it is mixed and arranged, that evidence in a point of light to be clearly seen, and easily comprehended: and having done this, I leave the reader to judge for himself, as I have judged for myself.

* Athanasius died, according to the church chronology, in the year 371.

CONCLUSION.

In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have spoken of the three frauds, *mystery*, *miracle*, and *prophecy*: and as I have seen nothing in any of the answers to that work, that in the least affects what I have there said upon those subjects, I shall not encumber this second part with additions, that are not necessary.

I have spoken also in the same work upon what is called *revelation*, and have shewn the absurd misapplication of that term to the books of the Old Testament, and the New; for certainly revelation is out of the question in reciting any thing of which man has been the actor, or the witness. That which a man has done or seen, needs no revelation to tell him he has done it, or seen it; for he knows it already; nor to enable him to tell it, or to write it. It is ignorance, or imposition, to apply the terms revelation in such cases; yet the Bible and Testament are classed under this fraudulent description of being all *revelation*.

Revelation then, so far as the term has relation between God and man, can only be applied to something which God reveals of his *will* to man; but though the power of the Almighty, to make such a communication, is necessarily admitted, because to that power all things are possible, yet, the thing so revealed (if any thing ever was revealed, and which, by the bye, it is impossible to prove) is revelation to the person *only to whom it is made*. His account of it to another is not revelation; and whoever puts faith in that account, puts it in the man from whom the account comes; and that man may have been deceived, or may have dreamed it; or he may be an impostor, and may lie. There is no possible criterion whereby to judge of the truth of what he tells; for even the morality of it would be no proof of revelation. In all such cases, the proper answer would be, "*When it is revealed to me, I will believe it to be revelation; but it is not, and cannot be incumbent upon me to believe it to be revelation before; neither is it proper that I should take the word of man as the word of God, and put man in the place of God.*" This is the manner in which I have spoken of revelation in the former part of the *Age of Reason*; and which, whilst it reverentially admits revelation as a possible thing, because, as before said, to the Almighty all things are possible, it prevents the imposition of one man upon

upon another, and precludes the wicked use of pretended revelation.

But though, speaking for myself, I thus admit the possibility of revelation; I totally disbelieve, that the Almighty ever did communicate any thing to man, by any mode of speech, in any language, or by any kind of vision, or appearance, or by any means which our senses are capable of receiving, otherwise than by the universal display of himself in the works of the creation, and by that repugnance we feel in ourselves to bad actions, and disposition to good ones.

The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries, that have afflicted the human race, have had their origin in this thing called revelation, or revealed religion. It has been the most dishonourable belief against the character of the divinity, the most destructive to morality, and the peace and happiness of man, that ever was propagated since man began to exist. It is better, far better, that we admitted, if it were possible, a thousand devils to roam at large, and to preach publicly the doctrine of devils, if there were any such, than that we permitted one such impostor and monster as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the Bible prophets, to come with the pretended word of God, in his mouth, and have credit among us.

Whence arose all the horrid assassinations of whole nations, of men, women, and infants, with which the Bible is filled; and the bloody persecutions, and tortures unto death, and religious wars, that since that time have laid Europe in blood and ashes; whence arose they, but from this impious thing called revealed religion, and this monstrous belief, that God has spoken to man? The lies of the Bible have been the cause of the one, and the lies of the Testament the other.

Some Christians pretend, that Christianity was not established by the sword; but of what period of time do they speak? It was impossible that twelve men could begin with the sword; they had not the power, but no sooner were the professors of Christianity sufficiently powerful to employ the sword, than they did so, and the stake and the faggot too; and Mahomet could not do it sooner. By the same spirit that Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, (if the story be true,) he would cut off his head, and the head of his master, had he been able. Besides this, Christianity grounds itself originally upon the Bible, and the Bible was established altogether by the sword, and that in the worst use of it; not to terrify, but to extirpate. The Jews made no converts: they butchered all. The Bible is the fire of the Testament, and
both

both are called the *word of God*. The Christians read both books; the ministers preach from both books; and this thing called Christianity is made up of both. It is then false to say that Christianity was not established by the sword.

The only sect that has not persecuted are the Quakers; and the only reason that can be given for it, is, that they are rather Deists than Christians. They do not believe much about Jesus Christ, and they call the scriptures a dead letter. Had they called them by a worse name, they had been nearer the truth.

It is incumbent on every man who reverences the character of the Creator, and who wishes to lessen the catalogue of artificial miseries, and remove the cause that has sown persecutions thick among mankind, to expel all ideas of a revealed religion as a dangerous heresy, and an impious fraud. What is it that we have learned from this pretended thing called revealed religion?—nothing that is useful to man, and every thing that is dishonourable to his maker. What is it the Bible teaches us?—rapine, cruelty, and murder. What is it the Testament teaches us?—to believe that the almighty committed debauchery with a woman, engaged to be married; and the belief of this debauchery is called faith.

As to the fragments of morality that are irregularly and thinly scattered in those books, they make no part of this pretended thing, revealed religion. They are the natural dictates of conscience, and the bonds by which society is held together, and without which, it cannot exist; and are nearly the same in all religions, and in all societies. The Testament teaches nothing new upon this subject; and where it attempts to exceed, it becomes mean, and ridiculous. The doctrine of not retaliating injuries is much better expressed in Proverbs, which is a collection as well from the Gentiles, as the Jews, than it is in the Testament. It is there said, Proverbs xxiv. ver. 21, “*If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.*”* but when
it

* According to what is called Christ's sermon on the mount in the book of Matthew, where, among some other good things, a great deal of this feigned morality is introduced, it is there expressly said, that the doctrine of forbearance, or of not retaliating injuries, was not any part of the doctrine of the Jews; but as this doctrine is found in Proverbs, it must, according to that statement have been copied from the Gentiles, from whom Christ had learned it. Those men, whom Jewish and Christian idolators have abusively called heathen, had much better and clearer ideas of justice and morality than are to be found in the Old Testament, so far as it is Jewish; or in the New. The answer of Solon on the question, “Which is the most perfect popular government,” has never been exceeded by any man since his time, as containing a maxim of political morality. “That says he, where the least injury done to the meanest individual, is considered as an insult on the whole constitution.” Solon lived above 500 years before Christ.

it is said, as in the Testament, “ *If a man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;*” it is assassinating the dignity of forbearance, and sinking man into a spaniel.

Loving of enemies is another dogma of feigned morality, and has besides no meaning. It is incumbent on man, as a moralist, that he does not revenge an injury; and it is equally as good in a political sense, for there is no end to retaliation; each retaliates on the other, and calls it justice: but to love in proportion to the injury, if it could be done, would be to offer a premium for a crime. Besides, the word *enemies* is too vague and general to be used in a moral maxim, which ought always to be clear and defined, like a proverb. If a man be the enemy of another from mistake and prejudice, as in the case of religious opinions, and sometimes in politics, that man is different to an enemy at heart with a criminal intention; and it is incumbent upon us, and it contributes also to our own tranquility, that we put the best construction upon a thing that it will bear. But even this erroneous motive in him makes no motive for love on the other part; and to say that we can love voluntarily, and without a motive, is morally and physically impossible.

Morality is injured by prescribing to its duties. that, in the first place, are impossible to be performed; and, if they could be, would be productive of evil; or, as before said, be premiums for crime. The maxim *of doing as we would be done unto* does not include this strange doctrine of loving enemies; for no man expects to be loved himself for his crime or for his enmity.

Those who preach this doctrine of loving their enemies, are in general the greatest persecutors, and they act consistently by so doing; for the doctrine is hypocritical; and it is natural that hypocrisy should act the reverse of what it preaches. For my own part, I disown the doctrine, and consider it as a feigned or fabulous morality; yet the man does not exist that can say I have persecuted him, or any man, or any set of men, either in the American revolution, or in the French revolution; or that I have, in any case, returned evil for evil. But it is not incumbent on man to reward a bad action with a good one, or to return good for evil; and wherever it is done, it is a voluntary act, and not a duty. It is also absurd to suppose, that such doctrine can make any part of a revealed religion. We imitate the moral character of the creator by forbearing with each other, for he forbears with all: but this doctrine would imply that he loved man, not in proportion as he was good, but as he was bad.

If we consider the nature of our condition here, we must see there is no occasion for such thing as *revealed religion*. What is it we want to know? Does not the creation, the universe we behold, preach to us the existence of an Almighty power, that governs and regulates the whole? And is not the evidence that this creation holds out to our senses infinitely stronger than any thing we can read in a book, that any impostor might make and call the word of God? As for morality, the knowledge of it exists in every man's conscience.

Here we are. The existence of an Almighty power is sufficiently demonstrated to us, though we cannot conceive, as it is impossible we should, the nature and manner of its existence. We cannot conceive how we came here ourselves, and yet we know for a fact that we are here. We must know also, that the power that called us into being can, if he please, and when he pleases, call us to account for the manner in which we have lived here; and therefore, without seeking any other motive for the belief, it is rational to believe that he will, for we know before-hand that he can. The probability, or even possibility of the thing is all that we ought to know; for if we knew it as a fact, we should be the mere slaves of terror, our belief would have no merit, and our best actions no virtue.

Deism then teaches us, without the possibility of being deceived, all that is necessary or proper to be known. The creation is the Bible of the deist. He there reads, in the hand writing of the Creator himself, the certainty of his existence; and the immutability of his power, and all other Bibles and Testaments are to him forgeries. The probability that we may be called to account hereafter, will, to reflecting minds, have the influence of belief; for it is not our belief or disbelief, that can make or unmake the fact. As this is the state we are in, and which it is proper we should be in, as free agents, it is the fool only, and not the philosopher, nor even the prudent man, that will live as if there were no God.

But the belief of a God is so weakened by being mixed with the strange fable of the Christian creed, and with the wild adventures related in the Bible, and the obscurity and obscure nonsense of the Testament, that the mind of man is bewildered as in a fog. Viewing all these things in a confused mass, he confounds fact with fable; and as he cannot believe all, he feels a disposition to reject all. But the belief of a God, is a belief distinct from all other things, and ought not to be confounded with any. The notion of a Trinity of Gods has enfeebled the belief of *one* God. A multiplication of beliefs
acts

acts as a division of belief; and in proportion as any thing is divided, it is weakened.

Religion, by such means, becomes a thing of form, instead of fact; of notion, instead of principle; morality is banished to make room for an imaginary thing, called faith, and this faith has its origin in a supposed debauchery; a man is preached instead of a God; an execution is an object for gratitude; the preachers daub themselves with the blood, like a troop of assassins, and pretend to admire the brilliancy it gives them; they preach a humdrum sermon on the merits of the execution; then praise Jesus Christ for being executed, and condemn the Jews for doing of it.

A man, by hearing all this nonsense lumped and preached together, confounds the God of the creation with the imagined God of the Christians, and lives as if there were none.

Of all the systems of religion that ever were invented, there is none more derogatory to the Almighty, more unedifying to man, more repugnant to reason, and more contradictory in itself, than this thing called Christianity. Too absurd for belief, too impossible to convince, and too inconsistent for practice, it renders the heart torpid, or produces only atheists and fanatics. As an engine of power, it serves the purpose of despotism; and as a means of wealth, the avarice of priests; but so far as respects the good of man in general, it leads to nothing here, or hereafter.

The only religion that has not been invented, and that has in it every evidence of divine originality, is pure and simple deism. It must have been the first, and will probably be the last that man believes. But pure and simple deism does not answer the purpose of despotic governments. They cannot lay hold of religion as an engine, but by mixing it with human inventions, and making their own authority a part; neither does it answer the avarice of priests, but by incorporating themselves and their functions with it, and becoming, like the government, a party in the system. It is this that forms the otherwise mysterious connection of church and state; the church human, and the state tyrannic.

Were a man impressed as fully and as strongly as he ought to be, with the belief of a God, his moral life would be regulated by the force of that belief: he would stand in awe of God, and of himself, and would not do the thing that could not be concealed from either. To give this belief the full opportunity of force, it is necessary that it acts alone. This is deism.

But when, according to the Christian Trinitarian scheme, one part of God is represented by a dying man, and another

ther part, called the Holy Ghost, by a flying pigeon, it is impossible that belief can attach itself to such wild conceits.*

It has been the scheme of the Christian church, and of all the other invented systems of religion, to hold man in ignorance of the Creator, as it is of government to hold him in ignorance of his rights. The systems of the one are as false as those of the other, and are calculated for mutual support. The study of theology, as it stands in Christian churches, is the study of nothing; it is founded on nothing; it rests on no principles; it proceeds by no authorities; it has no data; it can demonstrate nothing; and admits of no conclusion. Not any thing can be studied as a science, without our being in possession of the principles upon which it is founded; and as this is not the case with Christian theology, it is therefore the study of nothing.

Instead then of studying theology, as is now done, out of the Bible and Testament, the meanings of which books are always controverted, and the authenticity of which is disproved, it is necessary that we refer to the Bible of the creation. The principles we discover there, are eternal, and of divine origin: they are the foundation of all the science that exists in the world, and must be the foundation of theology.

We can know God only through his works. We cannot have a conception of any one attribute, but by following some principle that leads to it. We have only a confused idea of his power, if we have not the means of comprehending something of its immensity. We can have no idea of his wisdom, but by knowing the order and manner in which it acts. The principles of science lead to this knowledge; for the Creator of man is the Creator of science, and it is through that medium that man can see God, as it were, face to face.

Could a man be placed in a situation, and endowed with power of vision, to behold at one view, and to contemplate deliberately, the structure of the universe, to mark the movements of the several planets, the cause of their varying appearances, the unerring order in which they revolve, even to the remotest comet, their connections and dependance on each other, and to know the system of laws established by the Creator, that governs and regulates the whole; he would then conceive far beyond what any church-theology can teach him,

* The book called the book of Matthew, says, chap. iii. ver. 16, that *the Holy Ghost descended in the shape of a dove*. It might as well have said a goose; the creatures are equally harmless, and the one is as much a nonsensical lie as the other. The second of acts, ver. 2, 3, says, that it descended in a mighty *rustling wind*, in the shape of *cloven tongues*; perhaps it was cloven feet. Such absurd stuff is fit only for tales of witches and wizards.

the power, the wisdom, the vastness, the munificence of the Creator: he would then see, that all the knowledge man has of science, and that all the mechanical arts, by which he renders his situation comfortable here, are derived from that source: his mind, exalted by the scene, and convinced by the fact, would increase in gratitude, as it increased in knowledge: his religion or his worship would become united with his improvement as a man; any employment he followed, that had connection with the principles of the creation, as every thing of agriculture, of science, and of the mechanical arts has, would teach him more of God, and of the gratitude he owes to him, than any theological Christian sermon he now hears. Great objects inspire great thoughts; great munificence excites great gratitude; but the grovelling tales and doctrines of the Bible and the Testament are fit only to excite contempt.

Though man cannot arrive, at least in this life, at the actual scene I have described, he can demonstrate it; because he has knowledge of the principles upon which the creation is constructed. We know that the greatest works can be represented in model, and that the universe can be represented by the same means. The same principles by which we measure an inch, or an acre of ground, will measure to millions in extent. A circle of an inch diameter has the same geometrical properties as a circle that would circumscribe the universe. The same properties of a triangle, that will demonstrate upon paper the course of a ship, will do it on the ocean; and when applied to what are called the heavenly bodies, will ascertain, to a minute, the time of an eclipse, though those bodies are millions of miles distant from us. This knowledge is of divine origin; and it is from the Bible of the creation that man has learned it, and not from the stupid Bible of the church, that teaches man nothing.*

All the knowledge man has of science and of machinery, by the aid of which his existence is rendered comfortable upon

* The Bible-makers have undertaken to give us, in the first chapter of Genesis, an account of the creation; and in doing this, they have demonstrated nothing but their ignorance. They make there to have been three days and three nights, evenings and mornings, before there was a sun; when it is the presence or absence of the sun that is the cause of day and night, and what is called his rising and setting that of morning and evening. Besides, it is a puerile and pitiful idea, to suppose the Almighty to say, Let there be light. It is the imperative manner of speaking that a conjurer uses, when he says to his cups and balls, Presto, be gone, and most probably has been taken from it; as Moses and his rod is a conjurer and his wand. Longinus calls this expression the sublime; and by the same rule, that of the conjurer is sublime, too, for the manner of speaking is expressively and grammatically the same. When authors and critics talk of the sublime, they see not how nearly it borders on the ridiculous. The sublime of the critics, like some parts of Edmund Burk's sublime and beautiful, is like a wind-mill just visible in a fog, which imagination might distort into a flying mountain: or an archangel: or a flock of wild geese.

earth, and without which he would be scarcely distinguishable in appearance and condition from a common animal, comes from the great machine and structure of the universe. The constant and unwearied observations of our ancestors, upon the movements and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, in what are supposed to have been the early ages of the world, have brought this knowledge upon earth. It is not Moses and the prophets, nor Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, that have done it. The Almighty is the great mechanic of the creation, the first philosopher, and original teacher of all science. Let us then learn to reverence our master, and not forget the labours of our ancestors.

Had we at this day no knowledge of machinery, and were it possible that man could have a view, as I have before described, of the structure and machinery of the universe, he would soon conceive the idea of constructing some at least of the mechanical works we now have; and the idea so conceived, would progressively advance in practice. Or could a model of the universe, such as is called an orrery, be presented before him, and put in motion, his mind would arrive at the same idea. Such an object, and such a subject, would, whilst it improved him in knowledge useful to himself as a man and a member of society, as well as entertaining, afford far better matter for impressing him with a knowledge of, and a belief in the Creator, and of the reverence and gratitude that man owes to him, than the stupid texts of the Bible and the Testament, from which, be the talents of the preacher what they may, only stupid sermons can be preached. If man must preach, let him preach something that is edifying, and from texts that are known to be true.

The Bible of the creation is inexhaustable in texts. Every part of science, whether connected with the geometry of the universe, with the systems of animal and vegetable life, or with the properties of inanimate matter, is a text as well for devotion as for philosophy; for gratitude, as for human improvement. It will, perhaps, be said, that if such a revolution in the system of religion take place, every preacher ought to be a philosopher. *Most certainly*, and every house of devotion a school of science.

It has been by wandering from the immutable laws of science, and the light reason, and setting up an invented thing called revealed religion, that so many wild and blasphemous conceits have been formed of the Almighty. The Jews have made him the assassin of the human species, to make room for the religion of the Jews. The Christians have made him the murderer of himself, and the founder of a new religion

religion to supersede and expel the Jewish religion. And to find pretence and admission for these things, they must have supposed his power or his wisdom imperfect, or his will changeable; and the changeableness of the will is the imperfection of the judgement. The philosopher knows that the laws of the Creator have never changed, with respect either to the principles of science, or the properties of matter. Why then is it to be supposed they have changed with respect to man?

I here close the subject. I have shewn in all the foregoing parts of this work, that the Bible and Testament are impositions and forgeries; and I leave the evidence I have produced in proof of it, to be refuted, if any one can do it; and I leave the ideas that are suggested in the conclusion of the work, to rest on the mind of the reader; certain as I am, that when opinions are free, either in matters of government or religion, truth will finally and powerfully prevail.

END OF THE SECOND PART OF THE AGE OF REASON.

SECOND EDITION.

LETTER

FROM

THOMAS PAINE

TO

GEORGE WASHINGTON,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA.

LONDON:

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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Paris, August, 1796.

As censure is but awkwardly softened by apology, I shall offer you no apology for this letter. The eventful crisis, to which your double politics have conducted the affairs of your country, requires an investigation uncramped by ceremony.

There was a time when the fame of America, moral and political, stood fair and high in the world. The lustre of her revolution extended itself to every individual, and to be a citizen of America, gave a title to respect in Europe. Neither meanness nor ingratitude had then mingled in the composition of her character. Her re-

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sistance

sistance to the attempted tyranny of England left her unsuspected of the one, and her open acknowledgment of the aid she received from France precluded all suspicion of the other. The Washington of politics had not then appeared.

At the time I left America (April 1787) the continental Convention, that formed the federal constitution, was on the point of meeting. Since that time new schemes of politics, and new distinctions of parties, have arisen. The term *Antifederalist* has been applied to all those who combated the defects of that constitution, or opposed the measures of your administration. It was only to the absolute necessity of establishing some federal authority, extending equally over all the States, that an instrument so inconsistent as the present federal constitution is, obtained a suffrage. I would have voted for it myself, had I been in America, or even for a worse, rather than have had none; provided it contained the means of remedying its defects by the same appeal to the people, by which it was to be established. It is always better policy to leave removable errors to expose themselves, than to hazard too much in contending against them theoretically.

I have introduced these observations not only to mark the general difference between Antifederalist and Anticonstitutionalist, but to preclude the effect,

effect, and even the application, of the former of these terms to myself. I declare myself opposed to several matters in the constitution, particularly to the manner in which what is called the executive is formed; and to the long duration of the senate; and if I live to return to America, I will use all my endeavours to have them altered. I also declare myself opposed to almost the whole of your administration; for I know it to have been deceitful, if not perfidious, as I shall show in the course of this letter. But as to the point of consolidating the States into a federal government, it so happens, that the proposition for that purpose came originally from myself. I proposed it in a letter to chancellor Livingston in the spring of the year 1782, whilst that gentleman was minister for foreign affairs. The five per cent duty recommended by congress had then fallen through, having been adopted by some of the States, altered by others, rejected by Rhode Island, and repealed by Virginia, after it had been consented to. The proposal in the letter I allude to, was to get over the whole difficulty at once, by annexing a continental legislative body to Congress; for in order to have any law of the Union uniform, the case could only be, that either Congress, as it then stood, must frame the law, and the States severally adopt it without alteration, or, the States must

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elect a continental legislature for the purpose. Chancellor Livingston, Robert Morris, Governor Morris, and myself, had a meeting at the house of Robert Morris on the subject of that letter. There was no diversity of opinion on the proposition for a continental legislature; the only difficulty was on the manner of bringing the proposition forward. For my own part, as I considered it as a remedy in reserve, that could be applied at any time, *when the States saw themselves wrong enough to be put right* (which did not appear to be the case at that time), I did not see the propriety of urging it precipitately, and declined being the publisher of it myself. After this account of a fact, the leaders of your party will scarcely have the hardiness to apply to me the term of Antifederalist. But I can go to a date and to a fact beyond this, for the proposition for electing a continental convention. To form the continental government is one of the subjects treated of in the pamphlet *Common Sense*.

Having thus cleared away a little of the rubbish that might otherwise have lain in my way, I return to the point of time at which the present federal constitution and your administration began. It was very well said by an anonymous writer in Philadelphia, about a year before that period, that "*thirteen states and ne'er a hoop will not make a barrel;*"

a barrel;" and as any kind of hoops the barrel, however defectively executed, would be better than none, it was scarcely possible but that considerable advantages must arise from the federal hooping of the States. It was with pleasure that every sincere friend to America beheld, as the natural effect of union, her rising prosperity; and it was with grief they saw that prosperity mixed, even in the blossom, with the germ of corruption. Monopolies of every kind marked your administration almost in the moment of its commencement. The lands obtained by the revolution were lavished upon partizans; the interest of the disbanded soldier was sold to the speculator; injustice was acted under the pretence of faith; and the chief of the army became the patron of the fraud. From such a beginning what else could be expected, than what has happened? A mean and servile submission to the insults of one nation; treachery and ingratitude to another.

Some vices make their approach with such a splendid appearance, that we scarcely know to what class of moral distinctions they belong. They are rather virtues corrupted than vices originally. But meanness and ingratitude have nothing equivocal in their character. There is not a trait in them that renders them doubtful. They

are so originally vice, that they are generated in the dung of other vices, and crawl into existence with the filth upon their back. The fugitives have found protection in you, and the levee-room is their place of rendezvous.

As the federal constitution is a copy, though not quite so base as the original, of the form of the British government, an imitation of its vices was naturally to be expected. So intimate is the connection between *form* and *practice*, that to adopt the one, is to invite the other. Imitation is naturally progressive, and is rapidly so in matters that are vicious.

Soon after the federal constitution arrived in England, I received a letter from a female literary correspondent (a native of New York) very well mixed with friendship, sentiment, and politics. In my answer to that letter, I permitted myself to ramble into the wilderness of imagination, and to anticipate what might hereafter be the condition of America. I had no idea that the picture I then drew was realising so fast, and still less that Mr. Washington was hurrying it on. As the extract I allude to is congenial with the subject I am upon, I here transcribe it.

"You touch me on a very tender point, when you say, *that my friends on your side the water cannot be reconciled to the idea of my abandoning*

America.

" *America even for my native England.* They are
 " right. I had rather see my horse Button eating
 " the grass of Bordentown or Morrifania, than
 " see all the pomp and show of Europe.

" A thousand years hence, for I must indulge a
 " few thoughts, perhaps in less, America may be
 " what England now is. The innocence of her
 " character, that won the hearts of all nations in
 " her favour, may sound like a romance, and her
 " inimitable virtue as if it had never been. The
 " ruins of that liberty, which thousands bled to
 " obtain, may just furnish materials for a village
 " tale, or extort a sigh from rustic sensibility;
 " whilst the fashionable of that day, enveloped in
 " dissipation, shall deride the principle, and deny
 " the fact.

" When we contemplate the fall of empires,
 " and the extinction of the nations of the ancient
 " world, we see but little more to excite our re-
 " gret than the mouldering ruins of pompous
 " palaces, magnificent monuments, lofty pyra-
 " mids, and walls and towers of the most costly
 " workmanship: but when the empire of America
 " shall fall, the subject for contemplative sorrow
 " will be infinitely greater than crumbling brass
 " or marble can inspire. It will not then be said,
 " Here stood a temple of vast antiquity, here rose
 " a Babel of invisible height, or there a palace of

“sumptuous extravagance; but, Here, ah painful
 “thought! the noblest work of human wisdom,
 “the grandest scene of human glory, the fair cause
 “of freedom, rose and fell: Read this, and then
 “ask if I forget America!”

Impressed, as I was, with apprehensions of this kind, I had America constantly in my mind in all the publications I afterwards made. The First, and, still more, the Second Part of the Rights of Man, bear evident marks of this watchfulness; and the Dissertation on First Principles of Government goes more directly to the point than either of the former. I now pass on to other subjects.

It will be supposed by those into whose hands this letter may fall, that I have some personal resentment against you: I will therefore settle this point before I proceed further.

If I have any resentment, you must acknowledge that I have not been hasty in declaring it, neither would it be now declared (for what are private resentments to the public) if the cause of it did not unite itself as well with your public as with your private character, and with the motives of your political conduct.

The part I acted in the American revolution is well known. I shall not here repeat it. I know also, that, had it not been for the aid received from France, in men, money, and ships, your cold
 and

and unmilitary conduct (as I shall show in the course of this letter) would in all probability have lost America; at least she would not have been the independent nation she now is. You slept away your time in the field, till the finances of the country were completely exhausted, and you have but little share in the glory of the final event. It is time, sir, to speak the undisguised language of historical truth.

Elevated to the chair of the presidency, you assumed the merit of every thing to yourself; and the natural ingratitude of your constitution began to appear. You commenced your presidential career by encouraging and swallowing the grossest adulation; and you travelled America from one end to the other, to put yourself in the way of receiving it. You have as many addressees in your chest as James the Second. As to what were your views, for if you are not great enough to have ambition, you are little enough to have vanity, they cannot be directly inferred from expressions of your own; but the partizans of your politics have divulged the secret.

John Adams has said, (and John it is known was always a speller after places and offices, and never thought his little services were highly enough paid) John has said, that, as Mr. Washington had no child, the presidency should be made

made hereditary in the family of Lun Washington. John might then have counted upon some sinecure for himself, and a provision for his descendants. He did not go so far as to say also, that the vice-presidency should be hereditary in the family of John Adams. He prudently left that to stand upon the ground, that one good turn deserves another *.

John Adams is one of those men who never contemplated the origin of government, or comprehended any thing of first principles. If he had, he might have seen, that the right to set up and establish hereditary government never did, and never can, exist in any generation at any time whatever; that it is of the nature of treason, because it is an attempt to take away the rights of all the minors living at that time, and of all succeeding generations. It is of a degree beyond common treason; it is a sin against nature. The equal rights of generations is a right fixed in the nature of things. It belongs to the son when of age, as it belonged to the father before him. John Adams would himself deny the right that any former deceased generation could have to decree authoritatively a succession of governors over

* Two persons, to whom John Adams said this, told me of it. The secretary of Mr. Jay was present when it was told to me.

him or over his children, and yet he assumes the pretended right, treasonable as it is, of acting it himself. His ignorance is his best excuse.

John Jay has said, (and this John was always the sycophant of every thing in power, from Mr. Girard in America, to Grenville in England) John Jay has said, that the senate should have been appointed for life. He would then have been sure of never wanting a lucrative appointment for himself, and have had no fears about impeachment. These are the disguised traitors that call themselves federalists*.

Could I have known to what degree of corruption and perfidy the administrative part of the government of America had descended, I could have been at no loss to have understood the reservedness of Mr. Washington towards me during my imprisonment in the Luxembourg. There are cases in which silence is a loud language. I will here explain the cause of that imprisonment, and return to Mr. Washington afterwards.

In the course of that rage, terror, and suspicion, which the brutal letter of the duke of Brunswick first started into existence in France, it happened, that almost every man who was opposed to vio-

* If Mr. Jay desires to know on what authority I say this, I will give that authority publicly when he chooses to call for it.

lence, or who was not violent himself, became suspected. I had constantly been opposed to every thing which was of the nature, or of the appearance of violence; but as I had always done it in a manner that showed it to be a principle founded in my heart, and not a political manœuvre, it precluded the pretence of accusing me. I was reached however under another pretence.

A decree was passed to imprison all persons born in England; but as I was a member of the Convention, and had been complimented with the honorary style of citizen of France, as Mr. Washington and some other Americans have been, this decree fell short of reaching me. A motion was afterwards made and carried, supported chiefly by Bourdon de l'Oise, for expelling foreigners from the Convention. My expulsion being thus effected, the two committees, of public safety and of general surety, of which Robespierre was the dictator, put me in arrestation under the former decree for imprisoning persons born in England. Having thus shown under what pretence the imprisonment was effected, I come to speak of such parts of the case as apply between me and Mr. Washington, either as president, or as an individual.

I have always considered that a foreigner, such as I was in fact, with respect to France, might be a member

a member of a Convention for framing a constitution, without affecting his right of citizenship, in the country to which he belongs, but not a member of a government after a constitution is formed; and I have uniformly acted upon this distinction. To be a member of a government requires a person being in allegiance to that government and to the country locally. But a constitution, being a thing of principle, and not of action, and which, after it is formed, is to be referred to the people for their approbation or rejection, does not require allegiance in the persons forming and proposing it; and besides this, it is only to the thing after it is formed and established, and to the country after its governmental character is fixed by the adoption of a constitution, that allegiance can be given. No oath of allegiance or of citizenship was required of the members who composed the Convention: there was nothing existing in form to swear allegiance to. If any such condition had been required, I could not, as citizen of America in fact, though citizen of France by compliment, have accepted a seat in the Convention.

As my citizenship in America was not altered or diminished by any thing I had done in Europe (on the contrary, it ought to have been considered as strengthened, for it was the American principle of

of government that I was endeavouring to spread in Europe), and as it is the duty of every government to charge itself with the care of any of its citizens who may happen to fall under an arbitrary persecution abroad, and this is also one of the reasons for which ambassadors or ministers are appointed, it was the duty of the executive department in America, to have made, at least, some inquiries about me, as soon as it heard of my imprisonment. But if this had not been the case, that government owed it to me on every ground and principle of honour and gratitude. Mr. Washington owed it to me on every score of private acquaintance, I will not now say friendship; for it has some time been known by those who know him, that he has no friendships, that he is incapable of forming any; he can serve or desert a man, or a cause, with constitutional indifference; and it is this cold hermaphrodite faculty that imposed itself upon the world, and was credited for a while by enemies, as by friends, for prudence, moderation, and impartiality.

Soon after I was put in arrestation, and imprisoned in the Luxembourg, the Americans who were then in Paris, went in a body to the bar of the Convention to reclaim me. They were answered by the then president, Vadier, who has since absconded, that *I was born in England*, and it was

signified

signified to them, by some of the committee of general surety, to whom they were referred (I have been told it was Billaud Varennes), that their reclamation of me was only the act of individuals, without any authority from the American government.

A few days after this, all communication between persons imprisoned and any person without the prison was cut off by an order of the police. I neither saw nor heard from any body for six months, and the only hope that remained to me was, that a new minister would arrive from America to supersede Morris, and that he would be authorised to inquire into the cause of my imprisonment; but even this hope, in the state to which matters were daily arriving, was too remote to have any consolatory effect, and I contented myself with the thought that I might be remembered when it would be too late. There is, perhaps, no condition from which a man conscious of his own uprightness cannot derive consolation; for it is in itself a consolation for him to find, that he can bear that condition with calmness and fortitude.

From about the middle of March (1794) to the fall of Robespierre, July 29 (9th of Thermidor), the state of things in the prisons was a continued scene of horror. No man could count
upon

upon life for twenty hours. To such a pitch of rage and suspicion were Robespierre and his committee arrived, that it seemed as if they feared to leave a man to live. Scarcely a night passed in which ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or more, were not taken out of the prison, carried before a pretended tribunal in the morning, and guillotined before night. One hundred and sixty-nine were taken out of the Luxembourg in one night, in the month of July, and one hundred and sixty of them guillotined. A list of two hundred more, according to the report in the prison, was preparing a few days before Robespierre fell. In this last list I have good reason to believe I was included. A memorandum in the hand-writing of Robespierre was afterwards produced in the Convention, by the committee to whom the papers of Robespierre were referred, in these words:

“ Demander que Thomas
 “ Paine soit decreté d’ac-
 “ cusation pour l’ intérêt
 “ de l’ Amerique, autant
 “ que de la France.”

“ Demand that Thomas
 “ Paine be decreed of ac-
 “ cusation for the interest
 “ of America, as well as
 “ of France.”

I had then been imprisoned seven months, and the silence of the executive part of the government of America (Mr. Washington) upon the case, and upon every thing respecting me, was
 explanation

explanation enough to Robespierre that he might proceed to extremities.

A violent fever, which had nearly terminated my existence, was, I believe, the circumstance that preserved it. I was not in a condition to be removed, or to know of what was passing, or of what had passed, for more than a month. It makes a blank in my remembrance of life. The first thing I was informed of was the fall of Robespierre.

About a week after this, Mr. Monroe arrived to supersede Governor Morris, and as soon as I was able to write a note legible enough to be read, I found a way to convey one to him by means of the man who lighted the lamps in the prison; and whose unabated friendship to me, from whom he had never received any service, and with difficulty accepted any recompence, puts the character of Mr. Washington to shame.

In a few days I received a message from Mr. Monroe, conveyed to me in a note from an intermediate person, with assurance of his friendship, and expressing a desire that I would rest the case in his hands. After a fortnight or more had passed, and hearing nothing further, I wrote to a friend who was then in Paris, a citizen of Philadelphia, requesting him to inform me what was the true situation of things with respect to me. I was sure that something was the matter, I began to

have hard thoughts of Mr. Washington, but I was unwilling to encourage them.

In about ten days I received an answer to my letter, in which the writer says, "Mr. Monroe has told me that he has no orders (meaning from the President, Mr. Washington) respecting you, but that he (Mr. Monroe) will do every thing in his power to liberate you; but, from what I learn from the Americans lately arrived in Paris, you are not considered, either by the American government or by individuals, as an American citizen."

I was now at no loss to understand Mr. Washington and his newfangled faction, and that their policy was silently to leave me to fall in France. They were rushing as fast as they could venture, without awakening the jealousy of America, into all the vices and corruptions of the British government; and it was no more consistent with the policy of Mr. Washington, and those who immediately surrounded him, than it was with that of Robespierre or of Pitt, that I should survive. They have, however, missed the mark, and the reaction is upon themselves.

Upon the receipt of the letter just alluded to, I sent a memorial to Mr. Monroe, which the reader will find in the appendix, and I received from him the following answer. It is dated the

18th

(19)

18th of September, but did not come to hand till about the 18th of October. I was then falling into a relapse, the weather was becoming damp and cold, fuel was not to be had, and the abscess in my side, the consequence of those things, and of the want of air and exercise, was beginning to form, and has continued immovable ever since. Here follows Mr. Monroe's letter.

DEAR SIR,

Paris, September 18, 1794.

I WAS favoured, soon after my arrival here, with several letters from you, and more latterly with one in the character of memorial upon the subject of your confinement; and should have answered them at the times they were respectively written, had I not concluded, you would have calculated with certainty upon the deep interest I take in your welfare, and the pleasure with which I shall embrace every opportunity in my power to serve you. I should still pursue the same course, and for reasons which must obviously occur, if I did not find that you are disquieted with apprehensions upon interesting points, and which justice to you and our country equally forbid you should entertain. You mention that you

have been informed you are not considered as an American citizen by the Americans, and that you have likewise heard that I had no instructions respecting you by the government. I doubt not the person who gave you the information meant well, but I suspect he did not even convey accurately his own ideas on the first point: for I presume the most he could say is, that you had likewise become a French citizen, and which by no means deprived you of being an American one. Even this however may be doubted, I mean the acquisition of citizenship in France, and I confess you have said much to show that it has not been made. I really suspect that this was all that the gentleman who wrote you, and those Americans he heard speak upon the subject, meant. It becomes my duty however to declare to you, that I consider you as an American citizen, and that you are considered universally in that character by the people of America. As such you are entitled to my attention; and so far as it can be given consistently with those obligations which are mutual between every government and even a transient passenger, you shall receive it.

The Congress have never decided upon the subject of citizenship in a manner to regard the present case. By being with us through the revolution, you are of our country as absolutely as *by being with the French thro their revolution, he ought therefore to be considered as a citizen of France.*

if you had been born there, and you are no more of England than every native American is. This is the true doctrine in the present case, so far as it becomes complicated with any other consideration. I have mentioned it to make you easy upon the only point which could give you any disquietude.

Is it necessary for me to tell you how much all your countrymen, I speak of the great mass of the people, are interested in your welfare? They have not forgotten the history of their own revolution, and the difficult scenes through which they passed; nor do they review its several stages without reviving in their bosoms a due sensibility of the merits of those who served them in that great and arduous conflict. The crime of ingratitude has not yet stained, and I trust never will stain, our national character. You are considered by them as not only having rendered important services in our own revolution, but as being, on a more extensive scale, the friend of human rights, and a distinguished and able advocate in favour of public liberty. To the welfare of Thomas Paine the Americans are not, nor can they be, indifferent.

Of the sense which the President has always entertained of your merits, and of his friendly disposition towards you, you are too well assured to

require any declaration of it from me. That I forward his wishes in seeking your safety is what I well know, and this will form an additional obligation on me to perform what I should otherwise consider as a duty.

You are, in my opinion, at present menaced by no kind of danger. To liberate you will be the object of my endeavours, and as soon as possible. But you must, until that event shall be accomplished, bear your situation with patience and fortitude; you will likewise have the justice to recollect, that I am placed here upon a difficult theatre*, many important objects to attend to, and with few to consult. It becomes me in pursuit of those, to regulate my conduct in respect to each, as to the manner and the time, as will, in my judgment, be best calculated to accomplish the whole.

With great esteem and respect consider me personally your friend,

JAMES MONROE.

The part in Mr. Monroe's letter in which he speaks of the President (Mr. Washington) is put

* This I presume alludes to the embarrassments which the strange conduct of Governor Morris had occasioned, and which, I well know, had created suspicions of the sincerity of Mr. Washington.

in

in soft language. Mr. Monroe knew what Mr. Washington had said formerly, and he was willing to keep that in view. But the fact is, not only that Mr. Washington had given no orders to Mr. Monroe, as the letter stated; but he did not so much as say to him, Inquire if Mr. Paine be dead or alive, in prison or out, or see if there be any assistance we can give him.

While these matters were passing, the liberations from the prisons were numerous; from twenty to forty in the course of almost every twenty-four hours. The continuance of my imprisonment after a new minister had arrived immediately from America, which was now more than two months, was a matter so obviously strange, that I found the character of the American government spoken of in very unqualified terms of reproach; not only by those who still remained in prison, but by those who were liberated, and by persons who had access to the prison from without. Under these circumstances I wrote again to Mr. Monroe, and found occasion to say, among other things, "It will not add to the popularity of Mr. Washington to have it believed in America, as it is believed here, that he connives at my imprisonment."

The case, so far as it respected Mr. Monroe, was, that having to get over the difficulties which

the strange conduct of Governor Morris had thrown in the way of a successor, and having no authority from the American government to speak officially upon any thing relating to me, he found himself obliged to proceed by unofficial means with individual members; for though Robespierre was overthrown, the Robespierrian members of the Committee of Public Safety still remained in considerable force, and had they found out that Mr. Monroe had no official authority upon the case, they would have paid little or no regard to his reclamation of me. In the mean time my health was suffering exceedingly, the dreary prospect of winter was coming on, and imprisonment was still a thing of danger. After the Robespierrian members of the Committee were removed by the expiration of their time of serving, Mr. Monroe reclaimed me, and I was liberated the 4th of November. Mr. Monroe arrived in Paris the beginning of August before. All that period of my imprisonment, at least, I owe not to Robespierre, but to his colleague in projects, George Washington. Immediately upon my liberation Mr. Monroe invited me to his house, where I remained more than a year and half; and I speak of his aid and his friendship, as an open-hearted man will always do in such a case, with respect and gratitude.

Soon

Soon after my liberation the Convention passed an unanimous vote to invite me to return to my seat among them. The times were still unsettled and dangerous, as well from without as within, for the coalition was unbroken, and the constitution not settled. I chose, however, to accept the invitation; for as I undertake nothing but what I believe to be right, I abandon nothing that I undertake; and I was willing also to show, that, as I was not of a cast of mind to be deterred by prospects or retrospects of danger, so neither were my principles to be weakened by misfortune or perverted by disgust.

Being now once more abroad in the world, I began to find that I was not the only one who had conceived an unfavourable opinion of Mr. Washington; it was evident that his character was on the decline as well among Americans, as among foreigners of different nations. From being the chief of the government, he had made himself the chief of a party; and his integrity was questioned, for his politics had a doubtful appearance. The mission of Mr. Jay to London, notwithstanding there was an American minister there already, had then taken place, and was beginning to be talked of. It appeared to others, as it did to me, to be enveloped in mystery, which

every

every day served either to increase or to explain into matter of suspicion.

In the year 1790, or about that time, Mr. Washington, as president, had sent Governor Morris to London, as his secret agent, to have some communication with the British ministry. To cover the agency of Morris it was given out, I know not by whom, that he went as an agent from Robert Morris, to borrow money in Europe, and the report was permitted to pass uncontradicted. The event of Morris's negotiation was, that Mr. Hammond was sent minister from England to America, Pinkney from America to England, and himself minister to France. If while Morris was minister in France he was not an emissary of the British ministry, and the coalesced powers, he gave strong reason to suspect him of it. No one who saw his conduct, and heard his conversation, could doubt his being in their interest; and had he not got off at the time he did, after his recall, he would have been in arrestation. Some letters of his had fallen into the hands of the Committee of Public Safety, and inquiry was making after him.

A great bustle has been made by Mr. Washington about the conduct of Genet in America, whilst that of his own minister, Morris, in France was infinitely more reproachable. If Genet was
imprudent

imprudent or rash, he was not treacherous; but Morris was all three. He was the enemy of the French revolution in every stage of it. But notwithstanding this conduct on the part of Morris, and the known profligacy of his character, Mr. Washington, in a letter he wrote to him at the time of recalling him on the complaint and request of the Committee of Public Safety, assures him, that though he had complied with that request, he still retained the same esteem and friendship for him as before. This letter Morris was foolish enough to tell of; and, as his own character and conduct were notorious, the telling of it could have but one effect, which was that of implicating the character of the writer. Morris still loiters in Europe, chiefly in England; and Mr. Washington is still in correspondence with him.—Mr. Washington ought therefore to expect, especially since his conduct in the affair of Jay's treaty, that France must consider Morris and Washington as men of the same description. The chief difference, however, between the two is, (for in politics there is none) that the one is profligate enough to profess an indifference about moral principles, and the other is prudent enough to conceal the want of them.

About three months after I was at liberty, the official note of Jay to Grenville, on the subject of the

the capture of American vessels by the British cruisers, appeared in the American papers that arrived at Paris. Every thing was of a piece—every thing was mean. The same kind of character went to all circumstances public or private. Disgusted at this national degradation, as well as at the particular conduct of Mr. Washington to me, I wrote to him (Mr. Washington) on the twenty-second of February, 1795, under cover to the then secretary of state (Mr. Randolph), and entrusted the letter to Mr. Letombe, who was appointed French consul to Philadelphia, and was on the point of taking his departure. When I supposed Mr. Letombe had failed, I mentioned the letter to Mr. Monroe, and as I was then in his house, I showed it to him. He expressed a wish that I would recall it, which he supposed might be done, as he had learned that Mr. Letombe had not then failed. I agreed to do so, and it was returned by Mr. Letombe under cover to Mr. Monroe. The letter will however now reach Mr. Washington publicly in the course of this work.

About the month of September following, I had a severe relapse, which gave occasion to the report of my death. I had felt it coming on a considerable time before, which occasioned me to hasten the work I had then on hand, *The Second*

Part

Part of the Age of Reason. When I had finished that work, I bestowed another letter on Mr. Washington, which I sent under cover to Mr. Franklin Bache of Philadelphia. The letter was as follows.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

SIR,

Paris, September 20, 1795.

I HAD written you a letter by Mr. Letombe, French consul, but at the request of Mr. Monroe, I withdrew it, and the letter is still by me. I was the more easily prevailed upon to do this, as it was then my intention to have returned to America the latter end of the present year (1795); but the illness I now suffer prevents me. In case I had come, I should have applied to you for such parts of your official letters (and your private ones, if you had chosen to give them) as contained any instructions or directions either to Mr. Monroe, or Mr. Morris, or to any other person, respecting me; for after you were informed of my imprisonment in France, it was incumbent on you to have made some inquiry into the cause, as you might very well conclude that I had

not

not the opportunity of informing you of it. I cannot understand your silence upon this subject upon any other ground, than as connivance at my imprisonment; and this is the manner it is understood here, and will be understood in America, unless you can give me authority for contradicting it. I therefore write you this letter, to propose to you to send me copies of any letters you have written, that I may remove this suspicion. In the preface to the second part of the *Age of Reason*, I have given a memorandum from the handwriting of Robespierre, in which he proposed a decree of accusation against me, "*for the interest of America as well as of France.*" He could have no cause for putting America in the case, but by interpreting the silence of the American government into connivance and consent. I was imprisoned on the ground of being born in England; and your silence in not inquiring the cause of that imprisonment, and reclaiming me against it, was tacitly giving me up. I ought not to have suspected you of treachery; but whether I recover from the illness I now suffer, or not, I shall continue to think you treacherous, till you give me cause to think otherwise. I am sure you would have found yourself more at your ease, had you acted by me as you ought; for whether your desertion of me was intended to gratify the Eng-

lish

lish government, or to let me fall into destruction in France, that you might exclaim the louder against the French revolution; or whether you hoped by my extinction to meet with less opposition in mounting up the American government; either of these will involve you in reproach you will not easily shake off.

THOMAS PAINE.

Here follows the letter above alluded to, which had been withdrawn.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

SIR,

Paris, Feb. 22, 1795.

As it is always painful to reproach those one would wish to respect, it is not without some difficulty that I have taken the resolution to write to you. The danger to which I have been exposed cannot have been unknown to you, and the guarded silence you have observed upon that circumstance is what I ought not to have expected from you, either as a friend or as president of the United States.

You knew enough of my character to be assured, that I could not have deserved imprisonment

ment in France ; and without knowing any thing more than this, you had sufficient ground to have taken some interest for my safety. Every motive arising from recollection ought to have suggested to you the consistency of such a measure. But I cannot find that you have so much as directed any inquiry to be made whether I was in prison or in liberty, dead or alive ; what the cause of that imprisonment was, or whether there was any service or assistance you could render. Is this what I ought to have expected from America, after the part I have acted towards her ? or will it redound to her honour or to yours that I tell the story ? I do not hesitate to say that you have not served America with more fidelity, or greater zeal, or more disinterestedness, than myself, and perhaps not with better effect. After the revolution of America had been established, you rested at home to partake its advantages, and I ventured into new scenes of difficulty to extend the principles which that revolution had produced. In the progress of events, you beheld yourself a president in America, and me a prisoner in France ; you folded your arms, forgot your friend, and became silent.

As every thing I have been doing in Europe was connected with my wishes for the prosperity of America, I ought to be the more surpris'd at
this

this conduct on the part of her government. It leaves me but one mode of explanation, which is, *that every thing is not as it ought to be amongst you*, and that the presence of a man who might disapprove, and who had credit enough with the country to be heard and believed, was not wished for. This was the operating motive with the despotic faction that imprisoned me in France (though the pretence was that I was a foreigner), and those that have been silent and inactive towards me in America, appear to me to have acted from the same motive. It is impossible for me to discover any other.

After the part I have taken in the revolution of America, it is natural that I feel interested in whatever relates to her character and prosperity. Though I am not on the spot to see what is immediately acting there, I see some part of what she is acting in Europe. For your own sake, as well as for that of America, I was both surprised and concerned at the appointment of Governor Morris, to be minister to France. His conduct has proved, that the opinion I had formed of that appointment was well founded. I wrote that opinion to Mr. Jefferson at the time, and I was frank enough to say the same thing to Morris, that *it was an unfortunate appointment*. His prating insignificant pomposity rendered him at

once offensive, suspected, and ridiculous; and his total neglect of all business had so disgusted the Americans, that they proposed drawing up a protest against him. He carried this neglect to such an extreme, that it was necessary to inform him of it; and I asked him one day *if he did not feel himself ashamed to take the money of the country and do nothing for it*; but Morris is so fond of profit and voluptuousness, that he cares nothing about character. Had he not been removed at the time he was, I think his conduct would have precipitated the two countries into a rupture, and in this case, hated *systematically*, as America is and ever will be by the British government, and at the same time suspected by France, the commerce of America would have fallen a prey to both.

If the inconsistent conduct of Morris exposed the interest of America to some hazard in France, the pusillanimous conduct of Mr. Jay in England has rendered the American government contemptible in Europe. Is it possible that any man, who has contributed to the independence of America, and to free her from the tyranny and injustice of the British government, can read with *out shame and indignation* the note of Jay to Grenville. It is a satire upon the declaration of independence, and an encouragement to the British

tish government to treat America with contempt. At the time this minister of petitions was acting this miserable part, he had every means in his hands to enable him to have done his business as he ought. The success or failure of his mission depended upon the success or failure of the French arms. Had France failed, Mr. Jay might have put his humble petition in his pocket, and gone home. The case happened to be otherwise, and he has sacrificed the honour, and perhaps the advantage of it, by turning petitioner. I take it for granted, that he was sent over to demand indemnification for the captured property; and, in this case, if he thought he wanted a preamble to his demand, he might have said, "that though the
 "government of England might suppose itself
 "under the necessity of seizing American property
 "bound to France, yet that supposed necessity
 "could not preclude indemnification to the pro-
 "prietors, who, acting under the authority of their
 "own government, were not accountable to any
 "other." But Mr. Jay sets out with an implied recognition of the right of the British government to seize and condemn; for he enters his complaint against the *irregularity* of the seizures, and the condemnation, as if they were reprehensible only by not being conformable to the terms of the proclamation under which they were seized. Instead of

being the envoy of a government, he goes over like a lawyer to demand a new trial. I can hardly help thinking but that Grenville wrote that note himself, and Jay signed it; for the style of it is domestic, and not diplomatic. The term *his Majesty*, used without any descriptive epithet, always signifies the king whom the minister represents. If this sinking of the demand into a petition was a juggle between Grenville and Jay to cover the indemnification, I think it will end in another juggle, that of never paying the money; and be made use of afterwards to preclude the right of demanding it: for Mr. Jay has virtually disowned the right by appealing to the *magnanimity of his majesty against the capturers*. He has made this magnanimous majesty the umpire in the case, and the government of the United States must abide by the decision. If, sir, I turn some part of this business into ridicule, it is to avoid the unpleasant sensation of serious indignation.

Among other things which I confess I do not understand, is your proclamation of neutrality. This has always appeared to me as an assumption on the part of the executive. But passing this over as a disputable case, and considering it only as political, the consequence has been that of sustaining the losses of war, without the balance of reprisals. When the profession of neutrality on

the part of America, was answered by hostilities on the part of Britain, the object and intention of that neutrality existed no longer ; and to maintain it after this was not only to encourage further insults and depredations, but was an informal breach of neutrality towards France, by passively contributing to the aid of her enemy. That the government of England considered the American government as pusillanimous, is evident from the increasing insolence of the conduct of the former towards the latter, till the affair of general Wayne. She then saw that it might be possible to kick a government into some degree of spirit. So far as the proclamation of neutrality was intended to prevent a dissolute spirit of privateering in America under foreign colours, it was undoubtedly laudable, but to continue it as a government neutrality, after the commerce of America was made war upon, was submission, and not neutrality. I have heard so much about this thing called neutrality, that I know not if the ungenerous and dishonourable silence (for I must call it such) that has been observed by your part of the government towards me, during my imprisonment, has not in some measure arisen from that policy.

Though I have written you this letter, you ought not to suppose it has been an agreeable undertaking to me. On the contrary, I assure you,

it has cost me some disquietude. I am sorry you have given me cause to do it, for as I have always remembered your former friendship with pleasure, I suffer a loss by your depriving me of that sentiment.

THOMAS PAINE..

That this letter was not written in very good temper, is very evident; but it was just such a letter as his conduct appeared to me to merit, and every thing on his part since has served to confirm that opinion. Had I wanted a commentary on his silence, with respect to my imprisonment in France, some of his faction have furnished me with it. What I here allude to is a publication in a Philadelphia paper, copied afterwards into a New York paper, both under the patronage of the Washington faction, in which the writer, still supposing me in prison in France, wonders at my lengthy respite from the scaffold. And he marks his politics still further by saying, " It appears, " moreover, that the people of England did not " relish his (Thomas Paine's) opinions quite so " well as he expected; and that for one of his last " pieces, as destructive to the peace and happiness " of their country (meaning, I suppose, the *Rights of Man*), they threatened our knight-errant with

" such

“such serious vengeance, that, to avoid a trip to Botany Bay, he fled over to France, as a less dangerous voyage.”

I am not refuting or contradicting the falsehood of this publication, for it is sufficiently notorious; neither am I censuring the writer; on the contrary, I thank him for the explanation he has incautiously given of the principles of the Washington faction. Insignificant, however, as the piece is, it was capable of having some ill effects, had it arrived in France during my imprisonment, and in the time of Robespierre; and I am not uncharitable in supposing, that this was one of the intentions of the writer*.

I have now done with Mr. Washington on the score of private affairs. It would have been far more agreeable to me, had his conduct been such as not to have merited these reproaches. Errors or caprices of the temper can be pardoned and forgotten; but a cold deliberate crime of the heart, such as Mr. Washington is capable of acting, is not to be washed away.—I now proceed to other matter.

* I know not who the writer of the piece is, but some late Americans say it is Phineas Bond, an American refugee, and now a British consul; and that he writes under the signature of Peter Skunk, or Peter Porcupine, or some such signature.

After Jay's note to Grenville arrived in Paris from America, the character of every thing that was to follow might be easily foreseen; and it was upon this anticipation that my letter of February the twenty-second was founded. The event has proved that I was not mistaken, except that it has been much worse than I expected.

It would naturally occur to Mr. Washington, that the secrecy of Jay's mission to England, where there was already an American minister, could not but create some suspicion in the French government, especially as the conduct of Morris had been notorious, and the intimacy of Mr. Washington with Morris was known.

The character, which Mr. Washington has attempted to act in the world, is a sort of non-describable, cameleon-coloured thing, called Prudence. It is in many cases a substitute for principle, and is so nearly allied to hypocrisy, that it easily slides into it. His genius for prudence furnished him in this instance with an expedient that served (as is the natural and general character of all expedients) to diminish the embarrassments of the moment, and multiply them afterwards; for he caused it to be announced to the French government as a confidential matter (Mr. Washington should recollect that I was a member of the Convention, and had the means of knowing what

I here

I here state), he caused it, I say, to be announced, and that for the purpose of preventing any uneasiness to France on the score of Mr. Jay's mission to England, that the object of that mission, and Mr. Jay's authority, were restricted to the demanding of the surrender of the western posts, and indemnification for the cargoes captured in American vessels. Mr. Washington knows that this was untrue; and knowing this, he had good reason to himself, for refusing to furnish the House of Representatives with copies of the instructions given to Jay, as he might suspect, among other things, that he should also be called upon for copies of instructions given to other ministers, and that in the contradiction of instructions his want of integrity would be detected. Mr. Washington may now, perhaps, learn, when it is too late to be of any use to him, that a man will pass better through the world with a thousand open errors upon his back, than in being detected in *one* fly falsehood. When one is detected, a thousand are suspected.

The first account that arrived in Paris of a treaty being negotiated by Mr. Jay (for nobody suspected any), came in an English newspaper, which announced, that a treaty *offensive* and *defensive* had been concluded between the United States of America and England. This was immediately

mediately denied by every American in Paris, as an impossible thing; and though it was disbelieved by the French, it imprinted a suspicion that some underhand business was going forward. At length the treaty itself arrived, and every well affected American blushed with shame.

It is curious to observe how the appearances of characters will change, whilst the root that produces them remains the same. The Washington faction having waded through the slough of negotiation, and, whilst it amused France with professions of friendship, contrived to injure her, immediately throws off the hypocrite, and assumes the swaggering air of a bravado. The party papers of that imbecile administration were on this occasion filled with paragraphs about sovereignty. A poltroon may boast of his sovereign right to let another kick him, and this is the only kind of sovereignty shown in the treaty with England. But those dashing paragraphs, as Timothy Pickering well knows, were intended for France, without whose assistance in men, money, and ships, Mr. Washington would have cut but a poor figure in the American war. But of his military talents I shall speak hereafter.

I mean not to enter into any discussion of any article of Jay's treaty: I shall speak only upon the whole of it. It is attempted to be justified on
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the ground of its not being a violation of any article or articles of the treaty pre-existing with France. But the sovereign right of explanation does not lie with George Washington and his man Timothy; France, on her part, has, at least, an equal right; and when nations dispute, it is not so much about words as about things.

A man, such as the world calls a sharper, as versed as Jay must be supposed to be in the quibbles of the law, may find a way to enter into engagements, and make bargains, in such a manner as to cheat some other party, without that party being able, as the phrase is, *to take the law of him*. This often happens in the cabalistical circle of what is called law. But when this is attempted to be acted on the national scale of treaties, it is too despicable to be defended, or to be permitted to exist. Yet this is the trick upon which Jay's treaty is founded, so far as it has relation to the treaty pre-existing with France. It is a counter-treaty to that treaty, and perverts all the great articles of that treaty to the injury of France, and makes them operate as a bounty to England, with whom France is at war. The Washington administration shows great desire, that the treaty between France and the United States be preserved. Nobody can doubt its sincerity upon this matter. There is not a British minister, a British
merchant,

merchant, or a British agent, or factor in America, that does not anxiously wish the same thing. The treaty with France serves now as a passport to supply England with naval stores, and other articles of American produce; whilst the same articles when coming to France are made contraband, or seizable, by Jay's treaty with England. The treaty with France says, that neutral ships make neutral property, and thereby gives protection to English property on board American ships; and Jay's treaty delivers up French property on board American ships to be seized by the English. It is too paltry to talk of faith, of national honour, and of the preservation of treaties, whilst such a bare-faced treachery as this stares the world in the face.

The Washington administration may save itself the trouble of proving to the French government its *most faithful* intentions of preserving the treaty with France; for France has now no desire that it should be preserved; she had nominated an envoy extraordinary to America, to make Mr. Washington and his government a present of the treaty, and to have no more to do with *that* or with *him*. It was at the same time officially declared to the American minister at Paris, *that the French republic had rather have the American government for an open enemy, than a treacherous friend*. This, sir, together

together with the internal distractions caused in America, and the loss of character in the world, is the *eventful crisis* alluded to in the beginning of this letter, to which your double politics have brought the affairs of your country. It is time that the eyes of America be opened upon you.

How France would have conducted herself towards America, and American commerce, after all treaty stipulations had ceased, and under the sense of services rendered, and injuries received, I know not. It is, however, an unpleasant reflection, that in all national quarrels the innocent, and even the friendly part of the community, become involved with the culpable and the unfriendly; and as the accounts that arrived from America continued to manifest an invariable attachment, in the general mass of the people, to their original ally, in opposition to the new-fangled Washington faction, the resolutions that had been taken in France were suspended. It happened also, fortunately enough, that Governor Morris was not minister at this time.

There is, however, one point that yet remains in embryo, and which, among other things, serves to show the ignorance of the Washington treaty makers, and their inattention to pre-existing treaties, when they were employing themselves in
framing

framing or ratifying the new treaty with England.

The second article of the treaty of commerce between the United States and France says, "The Most Christian King and the United States
"engage mutually not to grant any particular
"favour to other nations, in respect to commerce
"and navigation, that shall not immediately be-
"come common to the other party, who shall
"enjoy the same favour freely, if the concession
"was freely made, or on allowing the same com-
"pensation if the concession was conditional."

All the concessions therefore made to England by Jay's treaty are, through the medium of this second article in the pre-existing treaty, made to France, and become engrafted into the treaty with France, and can be exercised by her as a matter of right, the same as by England.

Jay's treaty makes a concession to England, and that unconditionally, of seizing naval stores in American ships, and condemning them as contra-
band. It makes also a concession to England to seize provisions and *other articles* in American ships. *Other articles*, are *all other articles*, and none but an ignoramus, or something worse, would have put such a phrase into a treaty. The condition annexed to this case is, that the provisions
and

and other articles so seized, are to be paid for at a price to be agreed upon. Mr. Washington, as president, ratified this treaty after he knew the British government had recommenced an indiscriminate seizure of provisions, and of all other articles in American ships; and it is now known that those seizures were made to fit out the expedition going to Quiberon Bay, and it was known beforehand that they would be made. The evidence goes also a good way to prove that Jay and Grenville understood each other upon that subject. Mr. Pinkney, when he passed through France in his way to Spain, spoke of the recommencement of the seizures as a thing that would take place. The French government had by some means received information from London to the same purpose, with the addition, that the recommencement of the seizures would cause no misunderstanding between the British and American governments. Grenville, in defending himself against the opposition in parliament on account of the scarcity of corn, said (see his speech at the opening of the parliament that met October 29, 1795) that *the supplies for the Quiberon expedition were furnished out of the American ships*, and all the accounts received at that time from England, stated that those seizures were made under the treaty. After the supplies for the Quiberon

Quiberon expedition had been procured, and the expected success had failed, the seizures were countermanded, and had the French seized provision vessels going to England, it is probable that the Quiberon expedition could not have been attempted.

In one point of view, the treaty with England operates as a loan to the English government. It gives permission to that government to take American property at sea, to any amount, and pay for it when it suits her; and besides this, the treaty is in every point of view a surrender of the rights of American commerce and navigation, and a refusal to France of the rights of neutrality. The American flag is not now a neutral flag to France, Jay's treaty of surrender gives a monopoly of it to England.

On the contrary, the treaty of commerce between America and France was formed on the most liberal principles, and calculated to give the greatest encouragement to the infant commerce of America. France was neither a carrier nor an exporter of naval stores, or of provisions; those articles belonged wholly to America, and they had all the protection in that treaty which a treaty can give. But so much has that treaty been perverted, that the liberality of it, on the part of France, has served to encourage Jay to form

form a counter-treaty with England; for he must have supposed the hands of France tied up by her treaty with America, when he was making such large concessions in favour of England. The injury which Mr. Washington's administration has done to the character, as well as to the commerce of America, is too great to be repaired by him. Foreign nations will be shy of making treaties with a government, that has given the faithless example of perverting the liberality of a former treaty to the injury of the party with whom it was made.

In what a fraudulent light must Mr. Washington's character appear in the world, when his declarations and his conduct are compared together? Here follows the letter he wrote to the committee of public safety, whilst Jay was negotiating in profound secrecy this treacherous treaty.

“ George Washington, President of the United States of America, to the representatives of the French people, members of the Committee of Public Safety of the French republic, the great and good friend and ally of the United States.

“ On the intimation of the wish of the French Republic,

“ Republic, that a new minister should be sent
 “ from the United States, I resolved to manifest
 “ my sense of the readiness with which *my* request
 “ was fulfilled (that of recalling Genet), by im-
 “ mediately fulfilling the request of your govern-
 “ ment (that of recalling Morris).

“ It was some time before a character could
 “ be obtained worthy of the high office of ex-
 “ pressing the attachment of the United States
 “ to the happiness of our allies, *and drawing closer*
 “ *the bonds of our friendship.* I have now made
 “ choice of James Monroe, one of our distin-
 “ guished citizens, to reside near the French repub-
 “ lic, in quality of minister plenipotentiary of the
 “ United States of America. He is instructed to
 “ bear to you our *sincere solicitude for your welfare,*
 “ *and to cultivate with zeal the cordiality so happily*
 “ *subsisting between us.* From a knowledge of his
 “ fidelity, probity, and good conduct, I have
 “ entire confidence that he will render himself ac-
 “ ceptable to you, and give effect to your desire of
 “ preserving and *advancing on all occasions the in-*
 “ *terest and connection of the two nations.* I beseech
 “ you, therefore, to give full credence to whatever
 “ he shall say to you on the part of the United
 “ States, and most of all, when he shall assure you
 “ that your prosperity is an object of our affection.

And

“ And I pray God to have the French Republic
 “ in his holy keeping.

G. WASHINGTON.”

Was it by entering into a treaty with England to surrender French property on board American ships, to be seized by the English, whilst English property on board American ships was declared by the French treaty not to be seizable, *that the bonds of friendship between America and France were to be drawn closer?* Was it by declaring naval stores contraband when coming to France, whilst by the French treaty they were not contraband when going to England, *that the connection between France and America was to be advanced?* Was it by opening the American ports to the British navy in the present war, from which ports that same navy had been expelled by the aid solicited from France in the American war (and that aid gratuitously given), *that the gratitude of America was to be shown, and the solicitude spoken of in the letter demonstrated?*

As the letter was addressed to the Committee of Public Safety, Mr. Washington did not expect it would get abroad in the world, or be seen by any other eye than that of Robespierre, or be heard by any other ear than that of the Committee; that it would pass as a whisper across the

Atlantic from one dark chamber to the other, and there terminate. It was calculated to remove from the mind of the Committee all suspicion upon Jay's mission to England, and in this point of view it was suited to the circumstances of the moment then passing; but as the event of that mission has proved the letter to be hypocritical, it serves no other purpose of the present moment than to show, that the writer is not to be credited. Two circumstances served to make the reading of the letter necessary in the Convention; the one was, that they who succeeded on the fall of Robespierre, found it most proper to act with publicity; the other, to extinguish the suspicions which the strange conduct of Morris had occasioned in France.

When the British treaty and the ratification of it by Mr. Washington were known in France, all further declarations from him of his good disposition, as an ally and a friend, passed for so many ciphers; but still it appeared necessary to him to keep up the farce of declarations. It is stipulated in the British treaty, that commissioners are to report at the end of two years on the case of *neutral ships making neutral property*. In the meantime neutral ships do *not* make neutral property according to the British treaty, and they *do* according to the French treaty. The preservation therefore of the French treaty became of

great importance to England, as by that means she can employ American ships as carriers, whilst the same advantage is denied to France. Whether the French treaty could exist as a matter of right after this clandestine perversion of it, could not but give some apprehensions to the partizans of the British treaty, and it became necessary to them to make up by fine words what was wanting in good actions.

An opportunity offered to that purpose. The Convention on the public reception of Mr. Monroe ordered the American flag and the French flag to be displayed unitedly in the hall of the Convention. Mr. Monroe made a present of an American flag for the purpose. The Convention returned this compliment by sending a French flag to America, to be presented by their minister, Mr. Adet, to the American government. This resolution passed long before Jay's treaty was known or suspected; it passed in the days of confidence;—but the flag was not presented by Mr. Adet till several months after the treaty had been ratified. Mr. Washington made this the occasion of saying some fine things to the French minister, and the better to get himself into tune to do this, he began by saying the finest things of himself.

" Born, Sir," said he, " in a land of liberty;
 " *having* learned its value; *having* engaged in a
 " perilous conflict to defend it; *having*, in a word,
 " devoted the best years of my life to secure its
 " permanent establishment in my own country;
 " *my* anxious recollections, *my* sympathetic feel-
 " ings, and *my* best wishes, are irresistibly excited
 " whenever in any country I see an oppressed
 " people unfurl the banner of freedom." Mr.
 Washington having expended so many fine phrases
 upon himself, was obliged to invent a new one
 for the French, and he calls them " Wonderful
 " people!" The coalesced powers acknowledge
 as much.

It is laughable to hear Mr. Washington talk of
 his *sympathetic feelings*, who has always been re-
 marked, even among his friends, for not having
 any. He has, however, given no proof of any
 to me. As to the pompous encomiums he so
 liberally pays to himself on the score of the Ame-
 rican revolution, the propriety of them may be
 questioned; and since he has forced them so
 much into notice, it is fair to examine his pre-
 tensions.

A stranger might be led to suppose, from the
 egotism with which Mr. Washington speaks, that
 himself, and himself only, had generated, con-
 ducted,

ducted, completed, and established the revolution. In fine, that it was all his own doing.

In the first place, as to the political part, he had no share in it; and therefore the whole of *that* is out of the question with respect to him. There remains then only the military part; and it would have been prudent in Mr. Washington not to have awakened inquiry upon that subject. Fame then was cheap; he enjoyed it cheaply; and nobody was disposed to take away the laurels, that, whether they were *acquired* or not, had been given.

Mr. Washington's merit consisted in constancy. But constancy was the common virtue of the revolution. Who was there that was inconstant? I know but of one military defection, that of Arnold; and I know of no political defection, among those who made themselves eminent when the revolution was formed by the declaration of independence. Even Silas Deane, though he attempted to defraud, did not betray.

But when we speak of military character, something more is to be understood than constancy; and something more *ought* to be understood than the Fabian system of *doing nothing*. The *nothing* part can be done by any body. Old Mrs. Thompson, the housekeeper of head-quarters (who threatened to make the sun and the *wind*

shine through Rivington of New-York) could have done it as well as Mr. Washington. Deborah would have been as good as Barak.

Mr. Washington had the nominal rank of commander in chief, but he was not so in fact. He had in reality only a separate command. He had no control over, or direction of, the army to the northward under Gates, that captured Burgoyne; or of that to the south under Greene, that recovered the southern states. The nominal rank, however, of commander in chief, served to throw upon him the lustre of those actions, and to make him appear as the soul and centre of all military operations in America.

He commenced his command June 1775, during the time the Massachusetts army lay before Boston, and after the affair of Bunker's-Hill. The commencement of his command was the commencement of inactivity. Nothing was afterwards done, or attempted to be done, during the nine months he remained before Boston. If we may judge from the resistance made at Concord, and afterwards at Bunker's-hill, there was a spirit of enterprise at that time, which the presence of Mr. Washington chilled into cold defence. By the advantage of a good exterior he attracts respect, which his habitual silence tends to preserve; but he has not the talent of inspiring ardour in an army. The
 enemy

the enemy removed from Boston to Halifax in March 1776, to wait for reinforcements from Europe, and to take a more advantageous position at New York.

The inactivity of the campaign of 1775, on the part of General Washington, when the enemy had a less force than in any other future period of the war, and the injudicious choice of positions taken by him in the campaign of 1776, when the enemy had its greatest force, necessarily produced the losses and misfortunes that marked that gloomy campaign. The positions taken were either islands or necks of land. In the former, the enemy, by the aid of their ships, could bring their whole force against a part of General Washington's, as in the affair of Long Island; and in the latter, he might be shut up as in the bottom of a bag. This had nearly been the case at New York, and it was so in part; it was actually the case at Fort Washington; and it would have been the case at Fort Lee, if General Greene had not moved precipitately off, leaving every thing behind, and by gaining Hackinsack-bridge, got out of the bag of Bergen-neck. How far Mr. Washington, as general, is blamable for these matters, I am not undertaking to determine, but they are evidently defects in military geography. The successful skirmishes at the close of that campaign

paign (matters that would scarcely be noticed in a better state of things) make the brilliant exploits of general Washington's seven campaigns. No wonder we see so much pusillanimity in the *president*, when we see so little enterprise in the *general*.

The campaign of 1777 became famous, not by any thing on the part of general Washington, but by the capture of general Burgoyne and the army under his command, by the northern army at Saratoga under general Gates. So totally distinct and unconnected were the two armies of Washington and Gates, and so independent was the latter of the authority of the nominal commander in chief, that the two generals did not so much as correspond, and it was only by a letter of general (since governor) Clinton, that general Washington was informed of that event. The British took possession of Philadelphia this year, which they evacuated the next, just time enough to save their heavy baggage and fleet of transports from capture by the French admiral D'Estaing, who arrived at the mouth of the Delaware soon after.

The capture of Burgoyne gave an eclat in Europe to the American arms, and facilitated the alliance with France. The eclat however was not kept up by any thing on the part of general Washington.

ington. The same unfortunate languor that marked his entrance into the field, continued always. Discontent began to prevail strongly against him, and a party was formed in Congress, whilst sitting at York-town in Pennsylvania, for removing him from the command of the army. The hope however of better times, the news of the alliance with France, and the unwillingness of showing discontent, dissipated the matter.

Nothing was done in the campaign of 1778, 1779, 1780, in the part where general Washington commanded, except the taking Stony-Point by general Wayne. The southern states in the mean time were overrun by the enemy. They were afterwards recovered by general Greene, who had in a very great measure created the army that accomplished that recovery. In all this general Washington had no share. The Fabian system of war, followed by him, began now to unfold itself with all its evils; for what is Fabian war without Fabian means to support it? The finances of Congress, depending wholly on emissions of paper-money, were exhausted. Its credit was gone. The continental treasury was not able to pay the expense of a brigade of wag-gons to transport the necessary stores to the army, and yet the sole object, the establishment of the revolution, was a thing of remote distance.

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The time I am now speaking of is in the latter end of the year 1780.

In this situation of things it was found not only expedient, but absolutely necessary, for Congress to state the whole case to its ally. I know more of this matter (before it came into Congress, or was known to general Washington), of its progress, and its issue, than I choose to state in this letter. Colonel John Laurens was sent to France, as an envoy extraordinary on this occasion, and by a private agreement between him and me, I accompanied him. We sailed from Boston in the Alliance frigate, February eleventh, 1781. France had already done much in accepting and paying bills drawn by Congress; she was now called upon to do more. The event of colonel Laurens's mission, with the aid of the venerable minister Franklin, was, that France gave in money, as a present, six millions of livres, and ten millions more as a loan, and agreed to send a fleet of not less than thirty sail of the line, at her own expense, as an aid to America. Colonel Laurens and myself returned from Brest the first of June following, taking with us two millions and a half of livres (upwards of one hundred thousand pounds sterling) of the money given, and convoying two ships with stores.

We arrived at Boston the twenty-fifth of August

gust following. De Grasse arrived with the French fleet in the Chesapeake at the same time, and was afterwards joined by that of Barras, making thirty-one sail of the line. The money was transported in waggons from Boston to the bank of Philadelphia, of which Mr. Thomas Willing, who has since put himself at the head of the list of petitioners in favour of the British treaty, was then president. And it was by the aid of this money, of this fleet, and of Rochambeau's army, that Cornwallis was taken; the laurels of which have been unjustly given to Mr. Washington. His merit in that affair was no more than that of any other American officer.

I have had, and still have, as much pride in the American revolution as any man, or as Mr. Washington has a right to have; but that pride has never made me forgetful whence the great aid came that completed the business. Foreign aid (that of France) was calculated upon at the commencement of the revolution. It is one of the subjects treated of in the pamphlet *Common Sense*, but as a matter that could not be hoped for, unless independence was declared. The aid however was greater than could have been expected.

It is as well the ingratitude as the pusillanimity of Mr. Washington, and the Washington faction,
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that has brought upon America the loss of character she now suffers in the world, and the numerous evils her commerce has undergone, and to which it is still exposed. The British ministry soon found out what sort of men they had to deal with, and they dealt with them accordingly; and if further explanation was wanting, it has been fully given since, in the snivelling address of the New York chamber of commerce to the president, and in that of sundry merchants of Philadelphia, which was not much better.

When the revolution of America was finally established by the termination of the war, the world gave her credit for great character; and she had nothing to do but to stand firm upon that ground. The British ministry had their hands too full of trouble to have provoked a rupture with her, had she shown a proper resolution to defend her rights: but encouraged as they were, by the submissive character of the American administration, they proceeded from insult to insult, till none more were left to be offered. The proposals made by Sweden and Denmark to the American government were disregarded. I know not if so much as an answer has been returned to them. The minister *penitentiary*, (as some of the British prints called him) Mr. Jay, was sent on a pilgrimage to London, to make all up by penance and

and petition. In the mean time, the lengthy and drowsy writer of the pieces signed *Camillus* held himself in reserve to vindicate *every thing*; and to sound in America the tocsin of terror upon the *inexhaustible* resources of England. Her resources, says he, are greater than those of all the other powers. This man is so intoxicated with fear and finance, that he knows not the difference between *plus* and *minus*—between a hundred pounds in hand, and a hundred pounds worse than nothing.

The commerce of America, so far as it had been established, by all the treaties that had been formed prior to that by Jay, was free, and the principles upon which it was established were good. That ground ought never to have been departed from. It was the justifiable ground of right; and no temporary difficulties ought to have induced an abandonment of it. The case now is otherwise. The ground, the scene, the pretensions, the every thing is changed. The commerce of America is by Jay's treaty put under foreign dominion. The sea is not free for her. Her right to navigate it is reduced to the right of escaping; that is, until some ship of England or France stops her vessels, and carries them into port. Every article of American produce, whether from the sea or the land, fish, flesh, vegetable,

ble, or manufacture, is by Jay's treaty made either contraband, or seizable. Nothing is exempt. In all other treaties of commerce the article which enumerates the contraband articles, such as fire-arms, gunpowder, &c. is followed by another which enumerates the articles not contraband: but it is not so in Jay's treaty. There is no exempting article. Its place is supplied by the article for seizing and carrying into port; and the sweeping phrase of provisions and *other articles* includes every thing. There never was such a base and servile treaty of surrender, since treaties began to exist.

This is the ground upon which America now stands. All her rights of commerce and navigation are to begin anew, and that with loss of character to begin with.—If there is sense enough left in the heart, to call a blush into the cheek, the Washington administration must be ashamed to appear.—And as to you, sir, treacherous in private friendship (for so you have been to me, and that in the day of danger), and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide, whether you are an APOSTATE, or an IMPOSTOR? Whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any?

THOMAS PAINE.

APPENDIX.

MEMORIAL

OF

THOMAS PAINE TO MR. MONROE,

Alluded to in the foregoing Letter.

Luxembourg, September 10, 1794.

I ADDRESS this memorial to you in consequence of a letter I received from a friend 18th Fructidor (Sept. 4th), in which he says—"Mr. Monroe has told me, that he has no orders (meaning from Congress) respecting you; but I am sure he will leave nothing undone to liberate you. But, from what I learn from all the late Americans, you are not considered either by the government or by the individuals as an American citizen. You have been made a French citizen, which you have accepted, and you have further made yourself a servant of the French republic; and therefore it would be out of character for an

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“ American minister to interfere in their internal concerns.—You must therefore either be liberated out of compliment to America, or stand your trial, which you have a right to demand.”

This information was so unexpected by me, that I am at a loss how to answer it. I know not on what principle it originates;—whether from an idea that I had voluntarily abandoned my citizenship of America, for that of France, or from any article of the American constitution applied to me.—The first is untrue with respect to any intention on my part; and the second is without foundation, as I shall show in the course of this memorial.

The idea of conferring the honour of citizenship upon foreigners who had distinguished themselves in propagating the principles of liberty and humanity, in opposition to despotism, war, and bloodshed, was first proposed by me to La Fayette at the commencement of the French revolution, when his heart appeared to be warmed with those principles. My motive in making this proposal was to render the people of different nations more fraternal than they had been, or then were. I observed that almost every branch of science had possessed itself of the exercise of this right, so far as regarded its institution. Most of the academies
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and societies in Europe, and also those of America, conferred the rank of honorary member upon foreigners eminent in knowledge, and made them, in fact, citizens of their literary or scientific republic; without affecting, or anywise diminishing, their rights of citizenship in their own country, or in other societies: and why the science of government should not have the same advantage, or why the people of one nation should not by their representatives exercise the right of conferring the honour of citizenship upon individuals eminent in another nation, without affecting *their* rights of citizenship in their proper country, is a problem yet to be solved.

I now proceed to remark on that part of the letter in which the writer says—that, “*from all he can learn from the late Americans, I am not considered in America, either by the government or by the individuals, as an American citizen.*”

In the first place I wish to ask, what is here meant by the government of America? The members who compose the government are only individuals when in conversation, and who, most probably, hold very different opinions upon the subject.—Have Congress as a body made any declaration respecting me, that they no longer consider me as a citizen? If they have not, any thing they may otherwise say, is no more than the opi-

nion of individuals, and consequently is not legal authority, or anywise sufficient authority to deprive any man of his citizenship. Besides, whether a man has forfeited his rights of citizenship, is a question not determinable by Congress, but by a court of judicature and a jury; and must depend upon evidence, and the application of some law or article of the constitution to the case. No such proceeding has yet been had, and consequently I remain a citizen until it be had, be that decision what it may; for there can be no such thing as a suspension of rights in the interim.

I am very well aware, and always was, of the article of the constitution which says, as nearly as I can recollect the words, that "any citizen of the United States, who shall accept any title, place, or office, from any foreign king, prince, or state, shall forfeit and lose his right of citizenship of the United States."

Had the article said, that *any citizen of the United States, who shall be member of any foreign convention, for the purpose of forming a free constitution, shall forfeit and lose the right of citizenship of the United States*, the article had been directly applicable to me; but the idea of such an article never could have entered the mind of the American Convention, and the present article is altogether foreign to the case with respect to me. It supposes

poses a government in active existence, and not a government dissolved; and it supposes a citizen of America accepting titles and offices under that government, and not a citizen of America who gives his assistance in a convention chosen by the people for the purpose of forming a government *de novo*, founded on their authority.

The late constitution and government of France was dissolved the tenth of August 1792. The national legislative assembly then in being supposed itself without sufficient authority to continue its sittings, and it proposed to the departments to elect, not another legislative assembly, but a convention, for the express purpose of forming a new constitution. When the assembly were discoursing on this matter, some of the members said, that they wished to gain all the assistance possible upon the subject of free constitutions; and expressed a wish to elect and invite foreigners of any nation to the convention, who had distinguished themselves in defending, explaining, and propagating, the principles of liberty. It was on this occasion that my name was mentioned in the assembly. After this a deputation from a body of the French people, in order to remove any objection that might be made against my assisting at the proposed convention, requested the assembly, as their representatives, to give me the title of

French Citizen ; after which I was elected a member of the Convention in four different departments, as is already known.

The case therefore is, that I accepted nothing from any king, prince, or state ; or from any government : for France was without any government, except what arose from common consent, and the necessity of the case. Neither did “ *I make myself a servant of the French republic,*” as the letter already alluded to expresses ; for at that time France was not a republic, not even in name. She was altogether a people in a state of revolution.

It was not until the Convention met that France was declared a republic, and monarchy abolished ; soon after which a committee was elected, of which I was a member, to form a constitution, which was presented to the Convention the fifteenth and sixteenth of February following, but was not to be taken into consideration till after the expiration of two months, and if approved by the Convention, was then to be referred to the people for their acceptance, with such additions or amendments as the Convention should make.

In thus employing myself upon the formation of a constitution, I certainly did nothing inconsistent with the American constitution. I took no oath of allegiance to France, or any other

oath

oath whatever. I considered the citizenship they had presented me as an honorary mark of respect paid to me not only as a friend to liberty, but as an American citizen. My acceptance of that, or of the deputyship, not conferred on me by any king, prince, or state, but by a people in a state of revolution, and contending for liberty, required no transfer of my allegiance or of my citizenship, from America to France. There I was a real citizen, paying taxes; here I was a voluntary friend, employing myself on a temporary service. Every American in Paris knew, that it was my constant intention to return to America, as soon as a constitution should be established, and that I anxiously waited for that event.

I ever must deny, that the article of the American constitution already mentioned, can be applied either verbally, intentionally, or constructively, to me. It undoubtedly was the intention of the Convention that framed it, to preserve the purity of the American republic, from being debased by foreign and soppish customs; but it never could be its intention to act against the principles of liberty, by forbidding its citizens to assist in promoting those principles in foreign countries; neither could it be its intention to act against the principles of gratitude. France had aided America in the establishment of her revolution,

lution, when invaded and oppressed by England and her auxiliaries. France in her turn was invaded and oppressed by a combination of foreign despots. In this situation I conceived it an act of gratitude in me, as a citizen of America, to render her in return the best services I could perform. I came to France (for I was in England when I received the invitation) not to enjoy ease, emoluments, and foppish honours, as the article supposes; but to encounter difficulties and dangers in defence of liberty; and I much question whether those who now malignantly seek (for some I believe do) to turn this to my injury, would have had courage to have done the same. I am sure Governor Morris would not. He told me the second day after my arrival (in Paris), that the Austrians and Prussians, who were then at Verdun, would be in Paris in a fortnight. I have no idea, said he, that seventy thousand disciplined troops can be stopt in their march by any power in France.

Besides the reasons I have already given for accepting the invitation to the Convention, I had another that has reference particularly to America, which I mentioned to Mr. Pinckney the night before I left London to come to Paris: "That it was to the interest of America that the
 "system of European governments should be
 "changed,

“ changed, and placed on the same principle
 “ with her own.”

It is certain that governments upon similar systems agree better together, than those that are founded on principles discordant with each other; and the same rule holds good with respect to the people living under them. In the latter case they offend each other by pity, or by reproach; and the discordancy carries itself to matters of commerce. I am not an ambitious man, but perhaps I have been an ambitious American. I have wished to see America the *Mother Church* of government.

I have now stated sufficient matter to show, that the article in question is not applicable to me; and that any such application to my injury, as well in circumstances as in rights, is contrary both to the letter and intention of that article, and is illegal and unconstitutional. Neither do I believe that any jury in America, when they are informed of the whole of the case, would give a verdict to deprive me of my rights upon that article. The citizens of America, I believe, are not very fond of permitting forced and indirect explanations to be put upon matters of this kind. I know not what were the merits of the case with respect to the person who was prosecuted for
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acting as prize-master to a French privateer, but I know that the jury gave a verdict against the prosecution. The rights I have acquired are dear to me. They have been acquired by honourable means, and by dangerous service in the worst of times, and I cannot passively permit them to be wrested from me. I conceive it my duty to defend them, as the case involves a constitutional and public question, which is, how far the power of the federal government extends, in depriving any citizen of his rights of citizenship, or of suspending them.

That the explanation of national treaties belongs to Congress, is strictly constitutional; but not the explanation of the constitution itself, any more than the explanation of law in the case of individual citizens. These are altogether judiciary questions. It is however worth observing, that Congress, in explaining the article of the treaty with respect to French prizes and French privateers, confined itself strictly to the letter of the article. Let them explain the article of the constitution with respect to me in the same manner, and the decision, did it appertain to them, could not deprive me of my rights of citizenship, or suspend them, for I have accepted nothing from any king, prince, state, or government.

You

You will please to observe, that I speak as if the federal government had made some declaration upon the subject of my citizenship; whereas the fact is otherwise; and your saying that you have no orders respecting me, is a proof of it. They, therefore, who propagate the report of my not being considered as a citizen of America by government, do it to the the prolongation of my imprisonment, and without authority; for Congress, *as a government*, has neither decided upon it, nor yet taken the matter into consideration; and I request you to caution such persons against spreading such reports.—But be these matters as they may, I cannot have a doubt that you find and feel the case very different, since you have heard what I have to say, and known what my situation is, than you did before your arrival.

Painful as the want of liberty may be, it is a consolation to me to believe, that my imprisonment proves to the world, that I had no share in the murderous system that then reigned. That I was an enemy to it, both morally and politically, is known to all who had any knowledge of me; and could I have written French as well as I can English, I would publicly have exposed its wickedness, and shown the ruin with which it was pregnant.—They who have esteemed me on former occasions,

occasions, whether in America, or in Europe, will, I know, feel no cause to abate that esteem, when they reflect, that *imprisonment with preservation of character, is preferable to liberty with disgrace.*

The letter before quoted in the first page of this memorial, says, that "it would be out of character for an American minister to interfere in the internal affairs of France."—This goes on the idea that I am a citizen of France, and a member of the Convention; which is not the fact. The Convention have declared me to be a foreigner; and consequently the citizenship and the election are null and void. It also has the appearance of a decision, that the article of the constitution respecting grants made to American citizens by foreign kings, princes, or states, is applicable to me; which is the very point in question, and against the application of which I contend. I state evidence to the minister to show, that I am not within the letter or meaning of that article, that it cannot operate against me; and I apply to him for the protection that, I conceive, I have a right to ask, and to receive. The internal affairs of France are out of the question with respect to my application, or his interference. I ask it not as a citizen of France, for I am not one; I ask it not as a member of the Convention, for I

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am not one; both these, as before said, have been rendered null and void; I ask it, not as a man against whom there is any accusation, for there is none; I ask it, not as an exile from America, whose liberties I have honourably and generously contributed to establish; I ask it as a citizen of America, deprived of his liberty in France, under the plea of his being a foreigner; and I ask it, because I conceive I am entitled to it upon every principle of constitutional justice and national honour.

THOMAS PAINE.











